

2020 | Brookings Economic Development Corporation



Brookings County Child Care Survey

Results - May 2020

Brookings County Child Care Survey Results

Table of Contents

Introduction Background Methodology	3
BEDC Role.....	4
Brookings County Economy.....	4
Quantifying The Need.....	5
Accessibility of Care.....	6
Affordability of Care.....	8
Quality of Care.....	9
Community Voices.....	12
Demographics Acknowledgement Sources.....	14



Introduction | Background

The 2020 Brookings County Child Care Survey was conducted by the Brookings Economic Development Corporation (BEDC). BEDC’s mission is to build the economy by leading collaborative efforts that support a prosperous place to live, learn, work and play. The 2020 Child Care Survey is a tool intended to further align workforce development efforts within the community. Child care is a barrier for employment, therefore, collaborative efforts are underway to create positive change. The purpose of the study includes creating an accurate picture of the supply of child care and identifying unmet needs for child care. An additional purpose of the assessment is to obtain locally derived data and information that can be used to guide community-based decisions and policy making around the issues of child care. This report summarizes findings from the responses of 890 individuals within Brookings County.

Methodology

A concerted effort was made to gather as much data as possible to obtain a valid sample size. The survey was distributed through Survey Monkey and advertised utilizing both paid (print, radio and social media) and unpaid (press release, email distribution) methods. The survey was open from January 27, 2020 – February 17, 2020*, with a total of 890 responses received at a cost of \$1.12 per result.

Based on the answers provided, not all questions were asked of all participants. For instance, those who indicated they did not currently utilize child care were asked a specific list of questions that other were not. The data in this report includes the number of participants who responded to the questions. While this survey provides good information executed in a rigorous way, it cannot be considered narrowly scientific.

**The data from the survey was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the pandemic, the current conditions of child care in Brookings County may differ.*

Targeted Participants

The main audience for the survey was anyone who lived and/or worked in Brookings County. Only 21 participants (1.0%) did not meet this requirement. To determine sampling size, participants were divided into categories depending on where they live: within Brookings city limits; neighboring community in Brookings County; farm/rural area in Brookings County; outside of Brookings County; college student – on campus; and college student – off-campus. The results were compared to estimates obtained from the U.S. Census and S.D. Board of Regents. The survey’s margin of error falls within an acceptable range for all but the college student categories.

BEDC's Role

BEDC was the leader in creating the child care survey to better assess the current care challenges and to collect data to analyze when anticipating future growth. The survey has helped in creating an accurate picture of the supply of child care, identifying unmet needs for child care, developing an estimate of available child care services for non-traditional care and special needs children, determining causes of inadequate care, gathering data on funding sources for child care programs, and determining the best use of child care funds. By investing in quality child care, we are supporting the needs of employees, which ultimately supports and strengthens our workforce as a whole.

BEDC's Child Care Survey was supported by the organization's Child Care Task Force, a group of local individuals with knowledge, expertise and backgrounds in the child care sector. A survey conducted in 2008 provided a snapshot of infant/child care issues and needs in Brookings at that time. Knowing that child care is fundamental to a strong Brookings economy, enhancing local child care options and expanding the presence of quality care is a high-priority for BEDC's Child Care Task Force.

Child Care and Brookings County Economy

According to the projections from the Brookings Area Workforce Study conducted by BEDC in 2019, there will be 716 new jobs added to Brookings County over the next three years in addition to the 1,216 currently open positions. Child care is an important part of the Brookings County economic ecosystem to help children prepare for success in school and life, but child care programs also provide key workforce development infrastructure that enables parents to enter the workforce. The quality and consistency of child care offerings can also affect the productivity of parent employees and, in turn, impact local employment and business development. When parents have reliable, high-quality child care, they can go to work confident that their children are in a stable and stimulating environment. But when child care arrangements fall apart during the day, parents may be distracted at work or need to leave to attend to the situation. Parents need access to child care while they work today, and the quality of child care establishes the foundation for the workforce of tomorrow.

Next Steps

Phase 1 Research & Data Collection

**Focus Groups*

**Awareness Campaign*

**Research Other Communities' Child Care Systems*

Phase 2 | Awareness & Data Driven Recommendations

**Child Care Task Force*

Quantifying the Need

Child Care in Brookings County

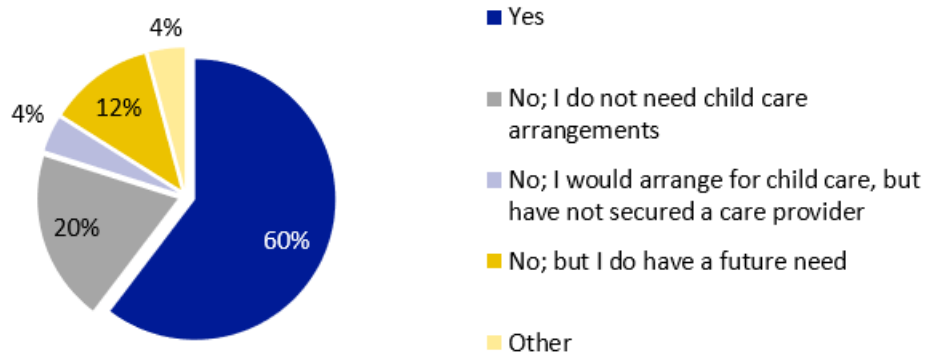
According to the 2017 American Community Survey, Brookings County has 2,055 children under 5 years old. The majority of children under 6 years old have both parents in the labor force. Approximately 72% of children in Brookings County need some form of childcare as both parents are in the labor force.

SOURCE: Kids Count Data Center

Do you currently utilize services of a child care provider?

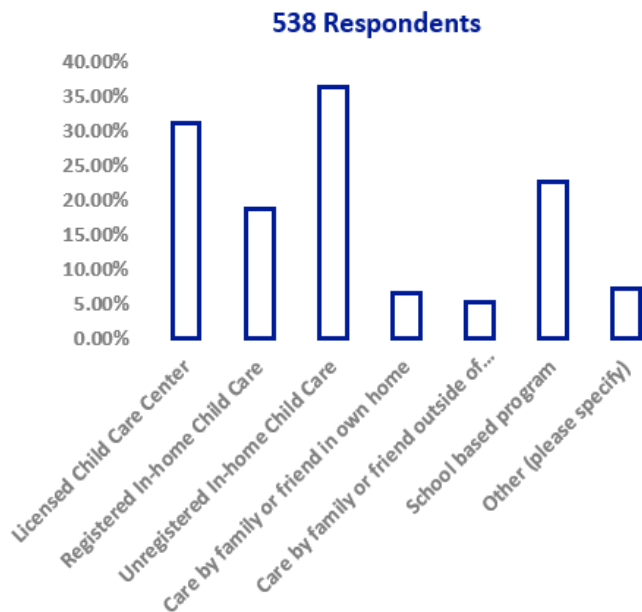
The current need for child care is ever-growing, 60% of survey participants are currently utilizing child care, while nearly 16% of respondents have a future need or a currently looking to secure child care.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	60.34%	537
No; I do not need child care arrangements	19.55%	174
No; I would arrange for child care, but have not secured a care provider	4.04%	36
No; but I do have a future need	11.91%	106
Other	4.16%	37
	Answered	890
	Skipped	0



What type of care are you currently utilizing (check all that apply)?

Unregistered, in-home child care received the highest number of responses with 196 out of 691.



Answer Choices	Responses
Licensed Child Care Center	31.23% 168
Registered In-home Child Care	18.77% 101
Unregistered In-home Child Care	36.43% 196
Care by family or friend in own home	6.69% 36
Care by family or friend outside of home	5.39% 29
School based program	22.68% 122
Other (please specify)	7.25% 39

“South Dakota law defines a Family Day Care Home as providing care and supervision of children from more than one unrelated family, in a family home, on a regular basis for part of a day as a supplement to regular parental care, without transfer of legal custody or placement for adoption. A family day care home may not be registered for care and supervision of more than 12 children at any one-time including children under the age of six who are living in the home.”

SOURCE: South Dakota Department of Social Services

Identify the number of children you currently have enrolled in child care.

With a range between 0-15 child per respondent, the average number of children per respondent is 1.7, and the median is 2 children.

- ❖ Birth to 24 Months..... 245 children
 - ❖ 25 to 36 Months 129 children
 - ❖ 37 Months to 5 Years 282 children
 - ❖ Before/After School Care (K-6th grade) 265 individuals
 - ❖ After School Care (7th-9th grade) 14 individuals
 - ❖ Total 935 children enrolled
- 541 Respondents**

Accessibility of Care

In your most recent search for child care, how many providers did you contact before securing care?

Based on survey responses, 63% of respondents had to connect with 3 or more providers before finally securing child care for their infant.

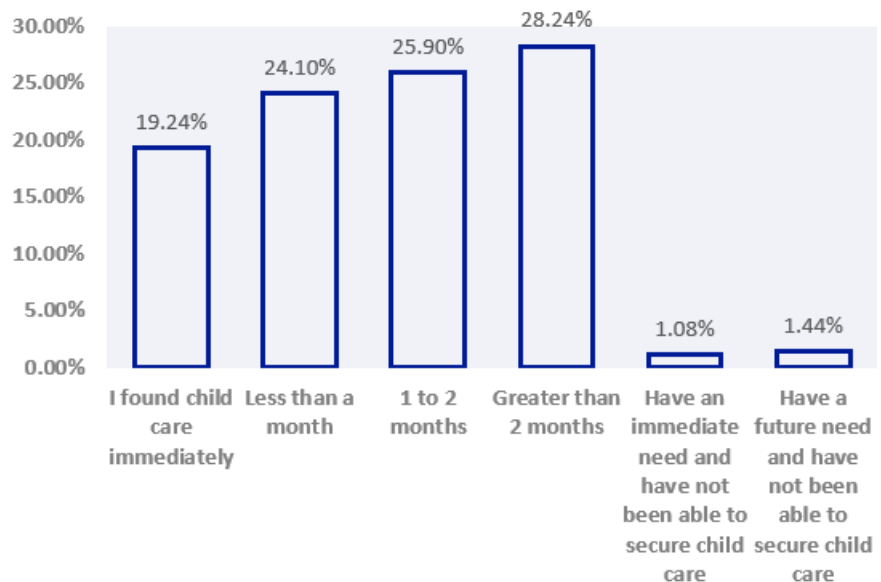
Answer Choices	Responses	Count
1-2	31.96%	178
→ 3-5	39.50%	220
6+	23.16%	129
Cannot recall	5.39%	30

557 Respondents

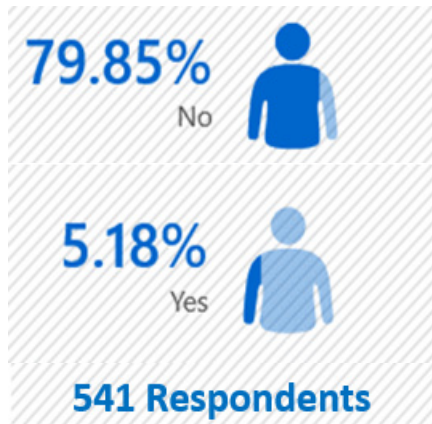
“I contacted 21 daycare providers before finally securing a spot with a Center that I had contacted 9 months prior to needing a spot. They called me and said they had an opening. The 21 other providers did not have an opening for an infant, so I was going to have to start looking for care in Volga or Aurora.”
-Survey Participant

How long did it take you to secure child care?

This information shows that respondents are spending a significant amount of time searching for and contacting child care providers before securing a spot. About 28% of participants invested greater than two months’ time into securing care.



Do you think the Brookings area has a sufficient number of child care options?



Data collected tells us individuals that participated in the survey do not feel that there are enough child care options available in Brookings. Individuals are having a challenging time finding available infant care. About 15% of respondents were unsure if the Brookings area has a sufficient number of child care options.

What schedule is needed for child care (check all that apply)?

Among individuals that participated in the survey, 85% reported needing child care on weekdays from 7:00AM – 6:00PM, nearly 23% of respondents also search for sick child care.

	Answer Choices	Responses
624 Respondents	<i>Weekdays, day time hours (7am - 6pm)</i>	85.26%
	<i>Weekdays, early morning care (5am - 7am)</i>	10.58%
	<i>Weekdays, evening care (6pm to midnight)</i>	7.85%
	<i>Weekdays, overnight care (6pm to 7am)</i>	2.40%
	<i>Weekend care (Saturday/Sunday)</i>	9.62%
	<i>Full-time care</i>	29.17%
	<i>Part-time care (partial days/weeks)</i>	25.00%
	<i>Sick Child Care</i>	22.92%
	<i>Other (please specify)</i>	5.13%

“There is such an incredible need for additional child care options in Brookings. We recently moved to Brookings this past Christmas and it took nearly 3 months of searching, interviewing and talking to potential caregivers prior to finding a good fit for our family’s needs and schedule. Dissatisfaction comes from the fact that our 2 daughters are not at the same facility because we could not find providers with 2 openings. So now, we have 2 different pickups, drop offs, and schedules to manage which results in a lot to manage and juggle!”

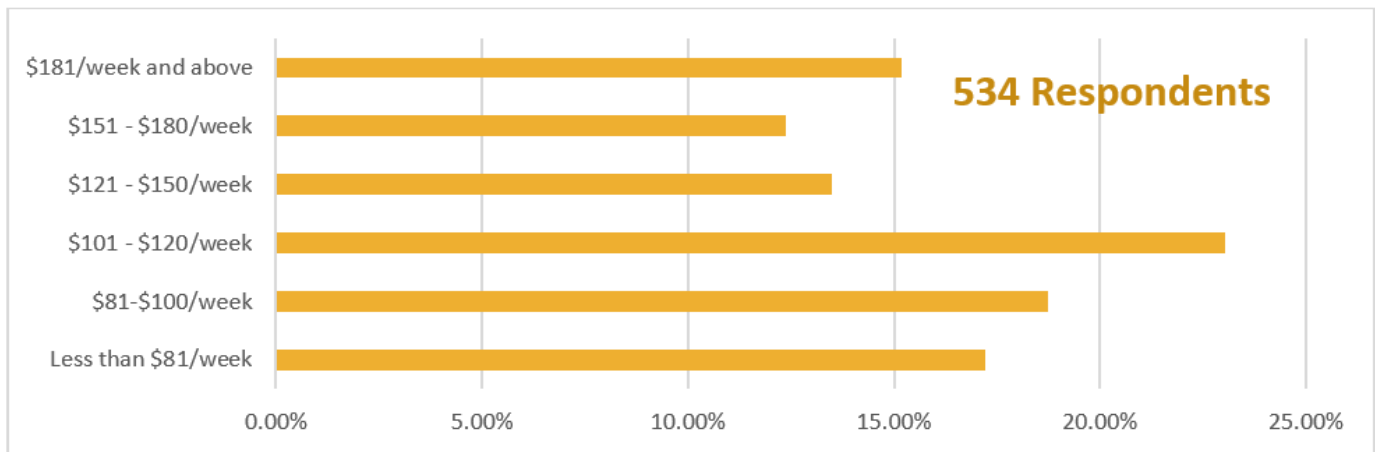
-Survey Participant

Affordability of Care

What do you spend on child care (per child)?

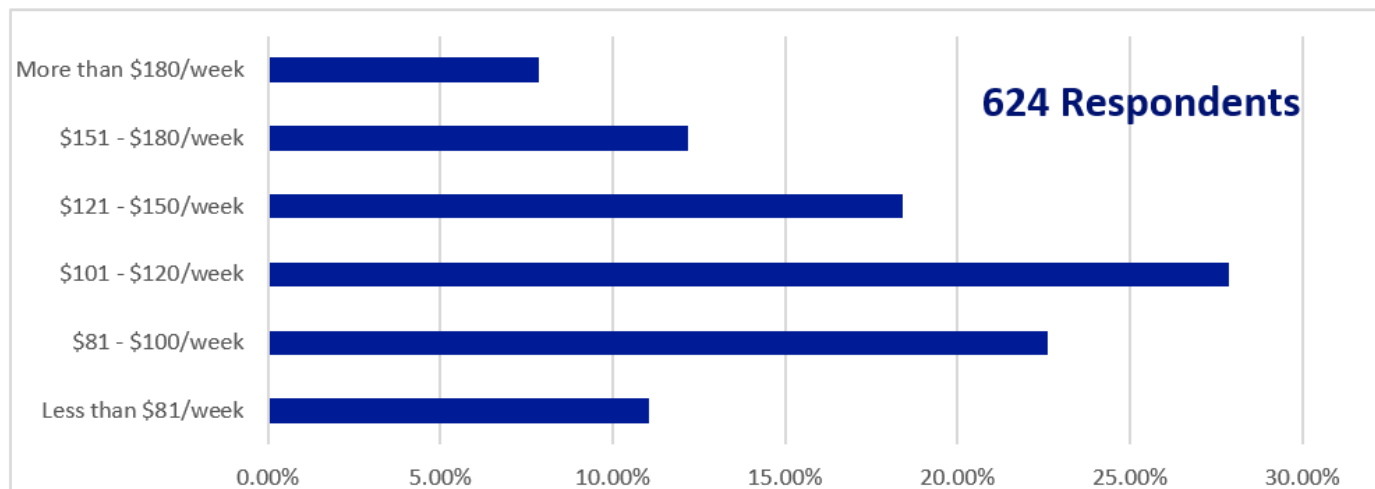
In terms of child care costs, the child care survey revealed the following:

Aproximately 23% of parents are paying between \$101 - \$120 per week, per child for their current care service. The figure also shows that nearly 15% of survey respondents are devoting \$181+ per week, per child to their child's care provider.



How much would you be willing and/or able to spend on child care (per child)?

About 28% of respondents have indicated that they would be willing and/or able to spend \$101 - \$120 per week, per child on care.



“I pay almost 70% of my monthly income for daycare for one child. I was unable to find child care the first year of my child's life and had to quit my teaching job to stay home. With the job I have now, I make about 30% of what my previous income once was. I still do not qualify for daycare assistance. I would like to try and find a cheaper option for childcare but am unable to find a licensed provider. I tried looking into an unlicensed provider but was disturbed by what I saw in several visits to available options. The daycare center that we were able to get into opens early and late enough, but I was only able to find one other unlicensed option that opened before 7:30 and that option was not open past 5:30. There is no such thing as AFFORDABLE licensed daycare in Brookings, SD that can accommodate the schedule of single moms.”

-Survey Participant

Comparison of Current and Preferred Arrangements

The current use of unregistered, in-home child care received the highest number of responses (196 out of 691). While the highest number of responses for the preferred arrangements, is licensed child care centers

CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

Unregistered In-home Child Care	196	28.36%
Licensed Child Care Center	168	24.31%
School based program	122	17.66%
Registered In-home Child Care	101	14.62%
Other (please specify)	39	5.64%
Care by family or friend in own home	36	5.21%
Care by family or friend outside of home	29	4.20%

PREFERRED ARRANGEMENTS

28.41%	369	Licensed Child Care Center
19.48%	253	Registered In-home Child Care
18.40%	239	School based program
11.62%	151	Care by family or friend in own home
10.78%	140	In-home Child Care (no preference to registered or non-registered)
6.77%	88	Care by family or friend outside of home
2.77%	36	Non-registered In-home Child Care
1.77%	23	Other (please specify)

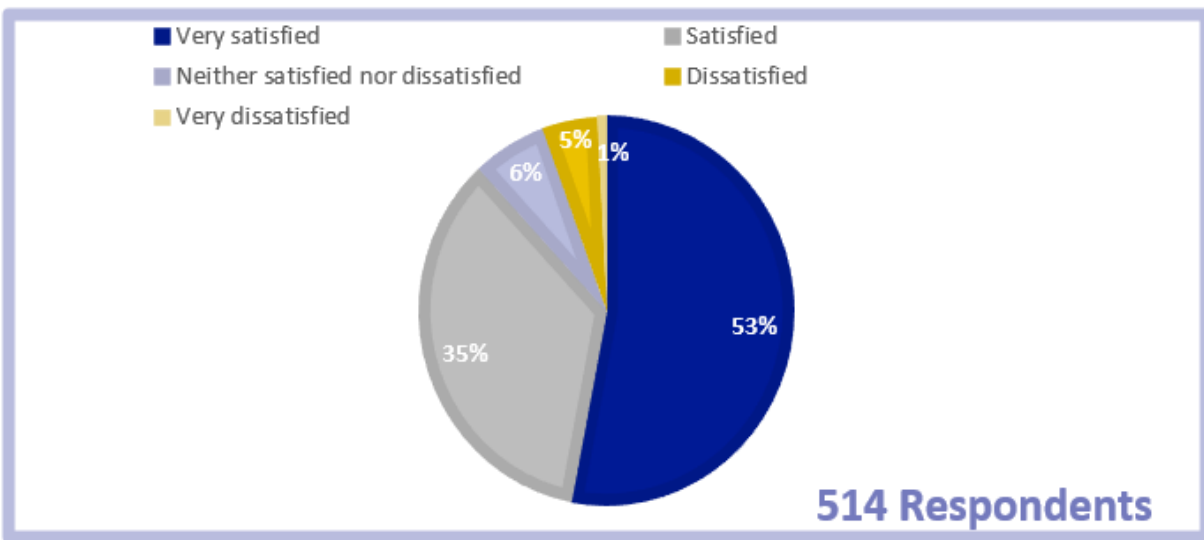
“I am very satisfied. However, it was stressful and hard to find the right person as there were several people that I checked with before finding this great person. Those others were not people that I would have considered great options for my kids. If I hadn't been fortunate enough to find my current provider, I would probably have had to quit my job because I wouldn't feel comfortable leaving my children with some of the other available options.”

-Survey Participant

Quality of Care

Are you satisfied with your current child care arrangement?

Nearly 88% of parents say there were very satisfied or satisfied with their current care arrangements in Brookings County.



How would you rate the quality of your child care arrangements (1-10, with 10 being the highest quality)?

Most survey respondents were happy with their child care provider in terms of overall quality with the average rating of 8.8 out of 10.



How could the quality of care be improved for your child(ren)? Check all that apply.

When individuals were asked to indicate areas that their current care could be improved, they implied they would like to see more educational/ learning opportunities presented to their children. Other areas of improvement are as follows in the figure below:

More educational/learning opportunities	51.61%
Better ratio of indoor to outdoor play (weather permitting)	35.48%
Better ratio of staff to children	34.90%
Better communication between provider and family	33.72%
More nutritious meals/snacks	30.79%
Provider (staff) that has better training and background in child care	19.65%
A safer and well-maintained environment	9.09%
More age-appropriate toys	5.28%

(341 Respondents)

What is the most important to you relating to your child care needs at the present time (ranking from 1-6, 1 being the most important)?

- 624 Respondents**
- 1.** COST OF CARE
 - 2.** LOCATION OF CARE
 - 3.** ACCESS TO MORE LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS
 - 4.** ACCESS TO MORE REGISTERED FAMILY/IN-HOME CARE PROVIDERS
 - 5.** FINDING TEMPORARY CARE (EXAMPLES: EMERGENCY BACK-UP CARE, SCHOOL CLOSINGS, SUMMER CARE)
 - 6.** FINDING EXTENDED HOURS OF CARE PROVIDERS

Community Voices

258

Comments from survey
participants

“It was very hard to find childcare once our family first moved to Brookings. I had a hard time figuring out where to start looking. The options I found at first, I wasn’t confident in the care. I decided to be a stay at home parent due to the lack of childcare for infants under 6 months. Once I found childcare, I was able to find a job within a month.”

“It is very hard to find quality care. We are lucky to have one of the best in the area, but moving here two years ago, it was one of our reservations (“will we be able to find good childcare??”). There is especially a lack of good options for babies under 1 year, and a lack of a nanny service.”

“More information is needed for Spanish speaking options for child care. Maybe offer a "how to open a day care" to Spanish speaking folks. This would also be an opportunity for non-Spanish speaking parents to seek licensed daycare for the children to be able to learn Spanish.”

“It is extremely hard to find child care in Brookings, especially for an infant. I called so many places with our first child and got on so many wait lists. I had to go back to work in July and didn’t get called until late June from a child care center saying they had room. We’ve been there for 1.5 years now and are expecting our 2nd child. We are on the list there and get priority beings we have another child there, but they said they still aren’t sure if they will have room for our child when it’s time for me to go back to work this June. It’s extremely nerve racking and stressful.”

“Really wish there were more licensed child care facilities while remaining affordable. My child receives excellent care at the center he attends, but the cost is a burden for families which do not qualify for financial aid. \$10000 a year is insane, and we want to have another child- 20k!? I love the setting of a structured learning and play environment of a registered care center, but at what cost?”

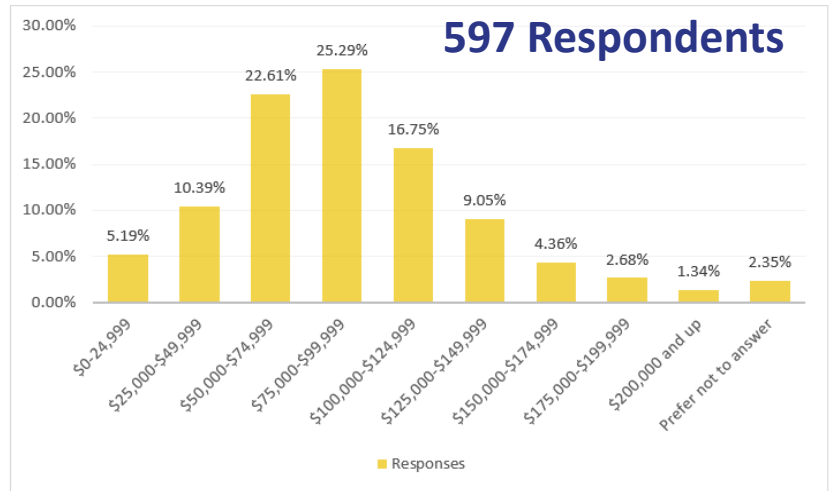
“I am currently staying home with our kids due to the high costs and lack of options in daycare. I was unable to find a provider that could take all kids at the same time. There is a definite need for more quality daycare centers.”

“We need more options as it is so difficult to get your children signed up that sometimes you have to go with a person or place you know isn’t the right fit and that only leads to problems and added stress on families.”

Demographics | Sources | Acknowledgements

Demographics

Over 66% of survey respondents reside within Brookings city limits. Almost half (47.80%) of the respondents' income ranged from \$50,000 - \$99,000 annually. Nearly 88% indicated a two-parent household.



Additional Sources

- 2019 Workforce Study, conducted by BEDC
- 2017 American Community Survey
- South Dakota Department of Social Services
- Kids Count Data Center

Acknowledgements

BEDC workforce development programs are designed to create awareness of opportunities and implement retention and recruitment strategies.

Through collaborative partnerships with The Family Resource Network, SDSU, United Way, local child care centers, Child Care Task Force and other community organizations, this survey was developed and distributed and results were compiled into this report.

Readers are encouraged to direct all inquiries or suggestions to BEDC by calling (605) 697.8103 or by emailing Sarah Hauge, Director of Workforce Development, Sarah@BrookingsEDC.com or Dawn Petterson, Workforce Analyst, Dawn@BrookingsEDC.com.

BEDC is the primary engine for promoting economic growth in Brookings, South Dakota and the surrounding area. BEDC serves as an advocate for the business community by building relationships with companies that allow them to succeed by taking advantage of the area's unique and progressive business environment. Call BEDC at (605) 697.8103 or email BEDC@BrookingsEDC.com for more information.

Questions? Want to Get Involved?

Are you interested in learning more about child care in Brookings or becoming part of the dialogue as the Child Care Task Force works towards improving access? Connect with Sarah Hauge, Director of Workforce Development, at Sarah@Brookingsedc.com.



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