

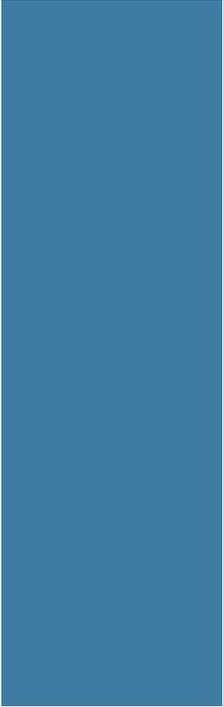
# 2019 Survey of Parents with Children Enrolled in Vancouver Preschools

Prepared for the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre and the City of Vancouver

by Barry Forer and Jane Beach

September 2019





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This survey would not have been possible without the involvement and assistance of preschool operators across Vancouver. It is through their efforts that parents were made aware of the survey and encouraged to complete it. We are very grateful for their contribution.

We would like to acknowledge, with much appreciation, the time that parents took out of their busy days to complete the survey and who added to our knowledge with their thoughtful and useful comments.

Many thanks to the City of Vancouver for funding this project and to the staff in the Ministry of Children and Family Development for providing access to de-identified data that helped us understand more about enrolment and capacity in preschools.



## 1.0

## Introduction

**PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART** of early learning and child care services, and yet, little is known about the families who use them, how preschool fits into their overall use of early childhood programs, or whether or not preschool is the preferred early childhood option for families.

In 2017, the newly elected provincial government announced a commitment to move towards universal, affordable, accessible, high quality child care. Budget 2018 announced details of the first steps towards the goal of universal child care. These initial measures have included the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, which provides additional funding to approved operators to reduce parent fees in full-day group care, increased fee subsidy (renamed the Affordable Child Care Benefit) rates and eligibility levels, the creation of 22,000 new child care spaces over the next three years, wage enhancements for front-line Early Childhood Educators, and the establishment of Universal Prototype sites that has converted licensed spaces to low cost spaces, with a maximum fee of \$10/day at 53 sites.

The City of Vancouver has a target of creating 2,300 new child care spaces over the next three years, with capital funding from the provincial government to support some of the expansion. Typically preschool spaces are not taken into account when child care needs are estimated in the City or expansion targets set.

The need to learn more about preschool use was identified through the City's child care policy review undertaken between 2017-2018. There are enough licensed spaces for 61% of 3 and 4-year old children in Vancouver, with more than half of those spaces in part-day preschools. There are full-day child care spaces for 29.1% and part-day spaces for 31.9% of children aged 3 and 4 years. However, it is important to keep in mind that most preschools operate numerous sessions in a week and may have two or more children occupying each licensed space. Preschool programs may serve anywhere from one to four children per licensed space depending on the length and arrangement of their sessions. There is no readily available information on the number of children enrolled in preschool, nor the degree to which it meets parents' needs.

In spring 2019, City of Vancouver staff approached Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (WCCRC) about the possibility of them undertaking a survey of parents with a child enrolled in a Vancouver preschool. Westcoast contracted with Barry Forer and Jane Beach, both child care researchers, to conduct the survey, analyze the results and prepare this summary of findings.

The survey was undertaken to better understand the various reasons parents choose preschool care, what other arrangements (if any) they use while they work or study, how well their early care and learning choices meet their needs, and to help determine any unmet demand for full time child care among parents using preschool as part of a patchwork of child care arrangements due to lack of availability or high cost.

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The specific objectives of the survey were to identify the:

- Total number of children participating in preschool spaces
- Reasons why parents choose to enroll their children in preschool, and how they use it.

Questions to address included:

- What proportion of parents are working or studying and using preschool as one component of their child care arrangement?
- What proportion of parents are “at home” and using preschool primarily as an early childhood education experience for their child or to prepare them for school?
- Is preschool the best fit for their needs?
- Would parents prefer full-time child care if it was available and affordable?

Our findings are intended to provide useful information for the City to use in future planning, as the Government of British Columbia works to increase the supply and affordability of licensed early childhood services.

## 2.1 Sampling Frame

A database of currently licensed preschools in the city of Vancouver was downloaded from Westcoast's iCarol database in January 2019. For these 130 preschool programs, the database included their name, physical address, email address, phone number, contact person, licensed capacity, neighbourhood, legal status (i.e., auspice), fees, and days of operation. It also included information on the languages served by the preschool, which was used to determine which programs required outreach to monolingual Chinese parents.

One important variable not available in the iCarol system was whether each program ran both morning and afternoon programs, or just one or the other. This is a crucial variable, as our plan for survey outreach (see below) required that we have a good estimate of the number of families potentially served by each preschool. We filled this information gap by looking at the websites of each preschool.

## 2.2 Survey Design and Translation

The initial survey content was developed by the project researchers, based on their experience over the past 30 years in conducting parent surveys concerning child care usage patterns, needs, and preferences. This content was reviewed by the Executive Director of WCCRC, staff in the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) Child Care Policy branch, and staff in the City of Vancouver Social Policy and Projects involved with child care research and policy. After taking their comments and suggestions into account, the draft online version in English was created in SurveyMonkey. After testing the survey for any problems with the intended skip patterns, one round of pretesting was conducted. This was done with a group of parents whose children were currently enrolled in the preschool operated by Collingwood Neighbourhood House. The online survey was finalized once parents completed the online survey and provided their comments and suggestions. This final version can be found in Appendix A.

During the process of fine-tuning the survey questions, the staff member at WCCRC who is responsible for translating their materials into Simplified Chinese took on the task of translating this survey. Her Simplified Chinese version of the survey was reviewed by at least two other native Chinese speakers at Westcoast, resulting in text that could now be placed into a separate Simplified Chinese version of the survey. This Chinese version of the online survey, once created, was tested by Westcoast staff to make sure that it worked as designed.

## 2.3 Creation of Posters and Postcards

Given the challenges inherent in having to reach parents via the preschool operators, extraordinary efforts were made to make all parents aware of the survey, and the reasons why they should complete it. We adopted a three-pronged approach, involving emails, postcards, and posters. In each case, we still relied on the operator of each preschool to be an active participant in these promotion efforts, but we felt that multiple modes of engagement were needed to reach as many parents as possible.

- **POSTERS:** Two versions (English and Simplified Chinese) of a full-colour 11” by 17” poster (see Appendix B) were created by Hands On Publications, in consultation with the project researchers and Westcoast. The posters provided all of the important information needed by parents to participate in the survey, including a deadline for participating and a QR code that, when scanned, would take the participant directly to the survey. The English and Simplified Chinese versions each had its own unique QR code. The translation of the poster text into Simplified Chinese was conducted by Mosaic.
- **POSTCARDS:** Two versions (English and Simplified Chinese) of a full-colour 5” by 7” postcard (see Appendix C) were created by Hands On Publications, in consultation with the project researchers and Westcoast. These postcards contained all of the same information as the posters for participating in the survey, with a little more detail provided, given that both sides of the postcard could be used. The postcard translation was also conducted by Mosaic.
- **PRINTING OF POSTERS AND POSTCARDS:** Based on the number of preschools, and their associated estimated maximum enrolment numbers (including the number of parents in each preschool who would likely need to do the survey in Chinese), we had 200 posters (150 English and 50 Chinese) and 9,000 postcards (8,000 in English and 1,000 in Chinese) printed for distribution to the preschools. The printing was done by Marine Printers.

## 2.4 Survey Distribution and Outreach Efforts

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, for each of the preschools in Vancouver, a package was created, containing three things: 1) a letter to the operator explaining the survey (see Appendix D); 2) a poster encouraging participation in the survey and 3) sufficient postcards for the estimated maximum number of enrolled children, based on licensed capacity and information about days and hours of operation. For the 30 preschools identified as being most likely to have parents fluent only in Chinese, posters and postcards in Simplified Chinese were included in the package. These packages were put into envelopes and then mailed via Canada Post to all of the preschools on March 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, an email was sent to all of the preschool operators, to inform them about the survey, and to tell them to expect a package in the mail sometime in the next week or two with the materials needed to promote the survey to their parents. This email included an attached letter to parents, to be forwarded by the operator to all parents currently enrolled in the program. The parent letter was in both English and Simplified Chinese, so that all parents would be informed about the survey. The

parent letter included a direct link to the survey, in the language appropriate to the parent. There was also an incentive for parents to complete the survey – a draw for one of five \$100 gift cards to My Little Green Shop (a children’s toys/clothing/accessories online store based in Vancouver).

To maximize the final response rate for the survey, we employed several different follow-up activities:

- Reminder emails were sent to the operators on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup>. For the last of these, different versions were created for those preschools with some respondents and those with no respondents as of that time (see Appendices E and F). In this final reminder letter, operators were informed that they would qualify for a draw for one of five \$100 gift cards from My Little Green Shop, if at least 10 parents from their preschool participated in the survey.
- We also put posters up at family resource centres and neighbourhood houses without a preschool at that physical location.
- For some preschools that showed no parent responses by the halfway mark of the data collection period, one of the researchers visited the site to distribute additional postcards and posters.
- All of the materials to parents and operators included an email address that they could use to ask any questions about the survey.

Although the stated deadline for completing the survey was April 30<sup>th</sup>, responses were allowed until May 5<sup>th</sup> before proceeding with data cleaning and analysis.

## 2.5 Response Before and After Data Cleaning

There were initially 535 responses to the online survey, including nine pretest responses, 30 from the Simplified Chinese version, and 496 from the English version. After examining the initial data, the final count was reduced to 472 (9 pretest, 22 Chinese, 441 English). The dropped responses were either due to: 1) parents who replied “no” to the screening question about having a child currently attending a Vancouver preschool, or 2) parents voluntarily exiting the survey before providing any useful information, or 3) parents who completed the survey more than once. In the last case, the version that was most complete was retained.

It was not possible to calculate an accurate return rate for this survey, due to several factors. First, we do not know the actual number of preschools that participated in the survey by forwarding the parent emails, distributing the postcards, and putting the posters up on their bulletin boards. We do know how many preschools had no parent responses, but this doesn’t necessarily imply non-participation at the parent level. Second, we do not have good information about the number of families with children enrolled in preschools. We did have access to CCOF administrative data (from November 2018), which is the only enrolment-related data available for British Columbia (see below). However, these data count the number of occupied spaces, not the number of children, which is problematic for estimating actual enrolment. In addition, only about 80% of Vancouver preschools participate in CCOF.

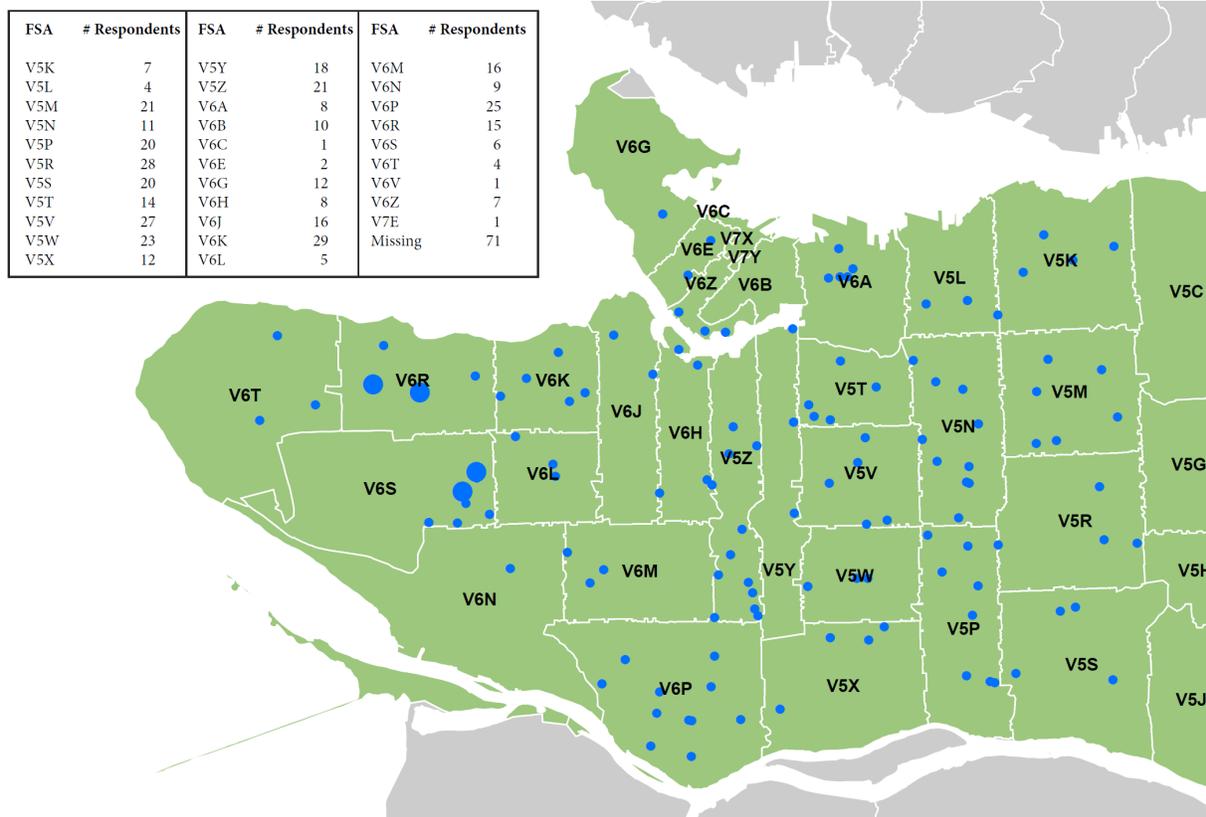
With a sample size of 472, the precision of the results is approximately plus or minus 4.3%, 95 times out of 100. This assumes a random sample, of course, and for surveys like ours, respondents are self-selected, and may therefore constitute a biased sample. As such, our results should be interpreted with caution.

## 2.6 Characteristics of Final Respondents

We can think of participation in this survey in terms of two different units of analyses: preschools and parents. Given that parents would not be able to participate unless the operators of their preschools make the survey information available to them, we first look at participation from a preschool perspective. Our results showed we received at least one parent response from 59% of the preschools in Vancouver. However, this percentage was much higher in preschools whose legal status was non-profit (71%) than those that were for-profit (33%). Of those preschools with some parent response, we also found that those in the non-profit sector were more likely to have five or more parents responding (45% vs. 29% for for-profit), despite little difference in licensed capacity by auspice.

Figure 1 shows the exact location of all Vancouver preschools and the number of parent respondents in each Forward Sortation Area (FSA), which is the first three digits of the postal code.

Figure 1. Where Vancouver preschools are located, and number of parent respondents by 3-digit postal code



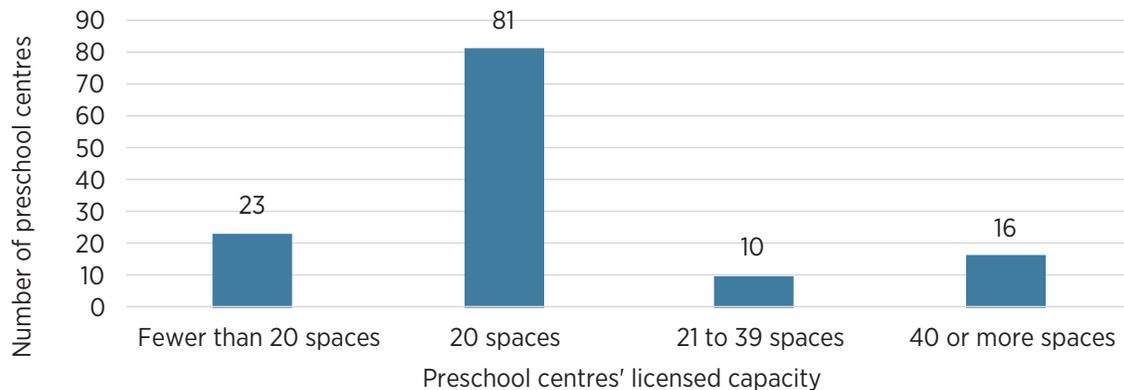


## 3.0

# Overview of Preschool Centres

As of January 2019, the City of Vancouver had 130 licensed preschool centres, ranging in licensed capacity from seven to 120 spaces, with the majority licensed for 20. In total, preschool centres in Vancouver had 3,011 licensed spaces. Figure 2 shows the number of centres by licensed capacity.

Figure 2. Number of preschool centres in Vancouver, by licensed capacity categories



The majority — 67.8% — of preschool spaces were non-profit and 32.2% for-profit. Approximately 25% of preschool spaces were created with some form of support from the City, referred to as “City-facilitated” spaces. The support from the City includes facilities that have been:

- Created through the land use planning and development process
- Located on City land or in City-owned buildings
- Created through partnerships with other public bodies, including Park Board and the Vancouver School Board
- Expanded or relocated with the assistance of the City.

There are no readily available data on the total number of children enrolled in preschool centres. In licensed group child care, usually one child is enrolled per licensed space. While there are a few examples of two children sharing one space, for the most part, we can estimate the number of children participating in group child care, by the number of enrolled spaces.

Preschools provide care and education on a part-time basis, to a maximum of four hours per session. Some preschools offer five-day per week enrolment, while others offer two-, three- or four-day options. Some offer both morning and afternoon sessions, while others offer one or the other. This means that a preschool could potentially serve four children for every licensed space. There are no readily available data on the total number of individual children enrolled in a given preschool, only total enrolled days.

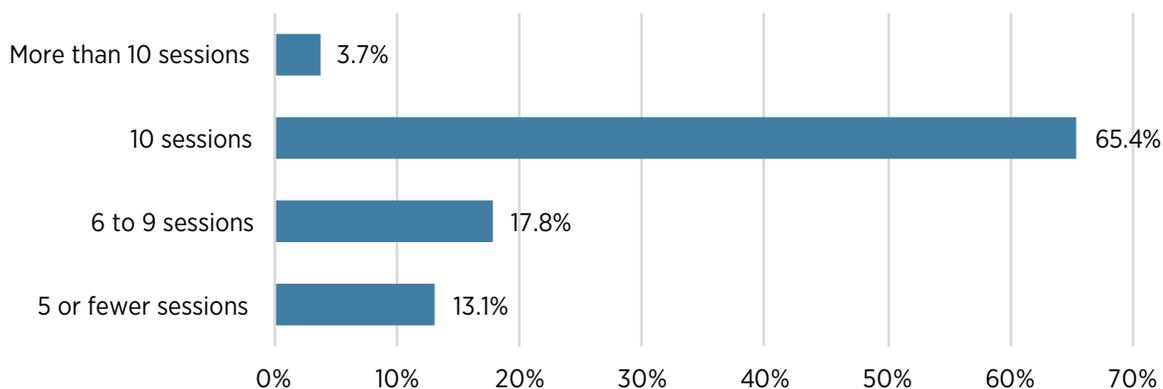
The Ministry of Children and Family Development provided de-identified enrolment data for the month of November 2018 for the 107 preschools that receive the Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF). These data included licensed capacity, maximum number of sessions per week, and total enrolment. The last of these was not number of unique children enrolled, but rather the number of spaces filled over that month. Thus, we were able to get a rough estimate of whether a facility was fully enrolled or not, and whether it offered each space only once (i.e., morning only or afternoon only) or more than once. However, these data did not enable us to estimate the total number of children enrolled.

We know that of the 107 preschool centres that received CCOF funding, the majority offer 10 sessions per week, ranging from four to 15 sessions. This means that a centre licensed for 20 children, operating 10 sessions per week, could potentially serve as many as 80 children, if it offers both morning and afternoon sessions, with options for enrolment twice a week, and three times a week. Or, they may offer a five day a week option, mornings or afternoons, serving up to 20 children each session. We can therefore assume that a centre licensed for 20 children operating 10 sessions per week, can potentially serve between 40 and 80 children.

Figure 3 shows the percent of preschools by their maximum number of sessions per week.

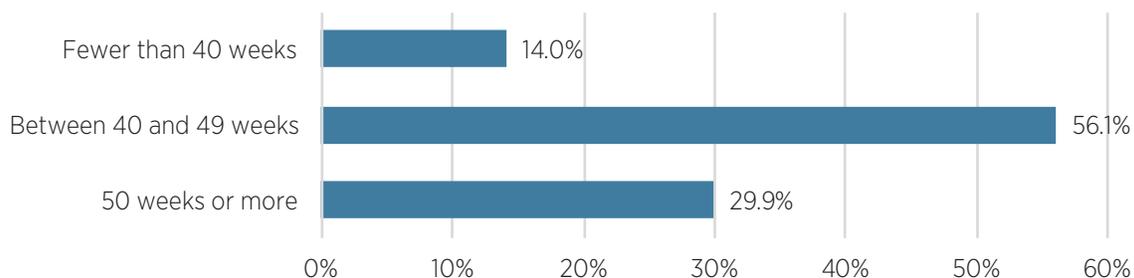
**As of January 2019, the City of Vancouver had 130 licensed preschool centres, ranging in licensed capacity from seven to 120 spaces, with the majority licensed for 20. In total, preschool centres in Vancouver had 3,011 licensed spaces.**

Figure 3. Preschools by maximum number of sessions per week (November 2018 CCOF data)



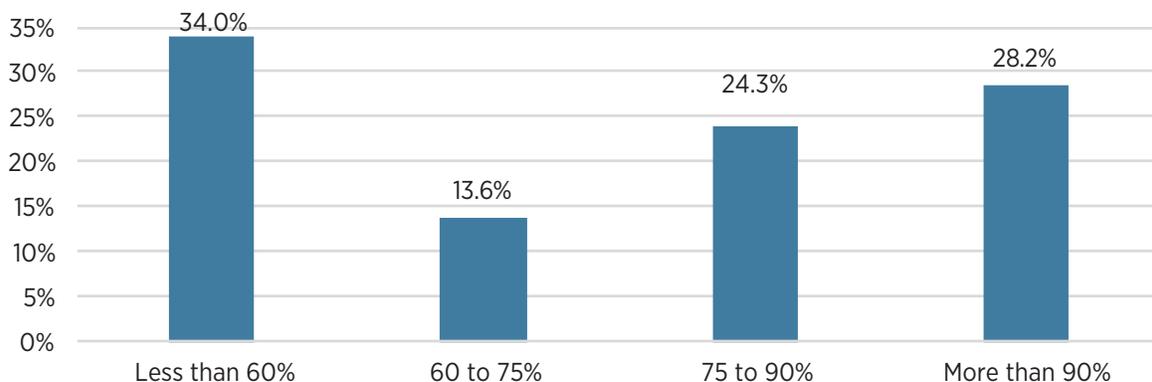
The Vancouver preschools in the CCOF database, operate between three and six days per week, with most operating five days. As Figure 4 shows, a majority of preschools (56.1%) operate between 40 and 49 weeks a year, while 29.9% operate year-round.

**Figure 4. Preschools by maximum number of weeks per year (November 2018 CCOF data)**



Information in the CCOF database helped us to make a rough estimate of the percent of the potential maximum number of enrolled spaces were actually occupied in that month. Maximum monthly enrolment is calculated by multiplying the number of licensed spaces for each preschool, by the maximum number of sessions/week, by four (weeks in the month). The percentage of preschools that are fully enrolled can be estimated by comparing the maximum enrolment to the total number of enrolled days reported by each preschool. Based on the total capacity and the maximum number of sessions offered, 28.2% were more than 90% enrolled. It is possible that preschools choose to operate at less than full capacity, or to operate fewer sessions than the maximum number reported; however, the data suggest that there is potential to increase the number of children enrolled in many preschools, within existing space, should the demand for service increase. As Figure 4 shows, about one-third of preschools operate at less than 60% potential capacity.

**Figure 5. Total enrolled days as a percentage of maximum enrolment in Vancouver preschools receiving CCOF, November 2018**



Preschool fees vary considerably by program and by number of sessions offered per week. Table 1 shows the results of the September 2018 fee survey conducted by Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre. It shows the range and the median fees by the number of sessions offered; however, it should be noted that there is considerable variation among programs of the daily duration of the sessions. Programs run from two to four hours, and so fees are not directly comparable.

**Table 1. Monthly preschool fees, by number of sessions per week, September 2018**

Sessions per week	Median fee	Range
Two sessions per week	\$180	\$103 - \$436
Three sessions per week	\$255	\$145 - \$475
Four sessions per week	\$350	\$215 - \$725
Five sessions per week	\$455	\$245 - \$895

“

Thank you very much for doing this survey. My choice is to stay home with my kids but what I do need is affordable part time care. I do work and it would be nice to have a break occasionally but the part time care has a monthly fee and then a hourly fee that works out to more than I make in a hour and so not worth it. I rely on the preschool hours and the kindness for friends and family to care for my children so I can work. Or I only work when my husband is home.

”

## 4.0

# Profile of Respondents

### 4.1 Respondent Family Characteristics

In Table 2, the demographic and job-related characteristics of all respondents are summarized. A number of these characteristics are used for sub-group analyses of the overall results, in later sections of the report.

**Table 2. Demographic and job-related characteristics of respondent families**

<b>Marital status</b>	
Respondent lives with a partner or spouse	93.7%
Lone parent household	6.3%
<b>Children at home</b>	
One child attending preschool and no other children under 13	30.7%
Two or more children under 13 in the household	69.3%
Two or more children in the household attending preschool	6.4%
Preschool child has a special need	5.1%
<b>Place of residence</b>	
Vancouver	93.8%
Burnaby	2.8%
Richmond	2.1%
Elsewhere	1.3%
<b>Employment status</b>	
Respondent works full-time	29.3%
Respondent works part-time	23.6%
Respondent on parental leave	6.7%
Respondent at home full-time caring for children	29.5%
Respondent has “other” <sup>1</sup> employment status	10.8%
Partner works full-time	82.4%

<sup>1</sup> “Other” employment status includes unemployment, attending school, and sporadic, irregular work hours.

<b>Employment status continued</b>	
Partner works part-time	6.4%
Partner on parental leave	1.1%
Partner at home full-time caring for children	4.2%
Partner has “other” employment status	5.7%
Respondent was born in Canada	57.8%
<b>Language usually spoken at home</b>	
English	57.5%
Cantonese	13.1%
Mandarin	5.1%
French	4.0%
Spanish	3.0%
Other	17.3%
<b>Annual household income</b>	
Under \$50,000	20.7%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	26.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	28.8%
\$150,000 and over	23.9%

Respondent households were grouped into four categories of work situations as described in Table 3.

<b>Table 3. Percent of respondent families in four categories of work situations</b>				
	<b>All parents work full-time<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>One works full-time, one works part-time</b>	<b>One works full-time, one is at home full-time</b>	<b>Other work situations<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Percent of all respondent families</b>	25.5%	23.8%	29.1%	21.6%

<sup>2</sup> All parents” include the lone parent in single parent families, and both parents in two-parent families.

<sup>3</sup> “Other work situations” include all those that do not fall into one of the other three categories. It includes households where a parent may be on parental leave, unemployed, going to school, working unpredictable, irregular hours, or neither parent is in the paid labour force.

A number of respondents or their spouses worked non-standard hours, which includes work taking place during evenings, nights or weekends, as well as work involving unpredictable, irregular or varying hours. Three in 10 respondent households reported at least one parent worked non-standard hours. Table 4 shows the percentage of households in work situations by daytime and non-standard hours.

**Table 4. Parents' work situations by daytime and non-standard hours**

Parents' work times	Percent of households
All parents work days	29.8%
One works days, one is at home with the children	24.6%
One works days, one works non-standard hours	16.1%
All parents work non-standard hours	5.8%
One works non-standard hours, one is at home with the children	6.0%
All parents are at home with the children	1.5%
Other	16.3%

## 4.2 Children in the Household

The 472 respondents reported a total of 876 children 12 years or younger living in the household. As Table 5 shows, households with two children 12 and younger were the most common.

**Table 5. Number of children age 12 and younger in the household**

Number of children in the household	Percent of households
One	30.3%
Two	54.5%
Three or more	15.1%

Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated that only one child in the household attended preschool. The other six percent (N=29 families) with a second child attending preschool were asked to provide detailed information on preschool participation for the older child in preschool, and some basic information on the preschool participation of the second child. Figure 6 shows the age distribution of the older (or only) child attending preschool, and Figure 7 shows the distribution for the younger child attending preschool.

Figure 6. Age of the older, or only child in the household attending preschool

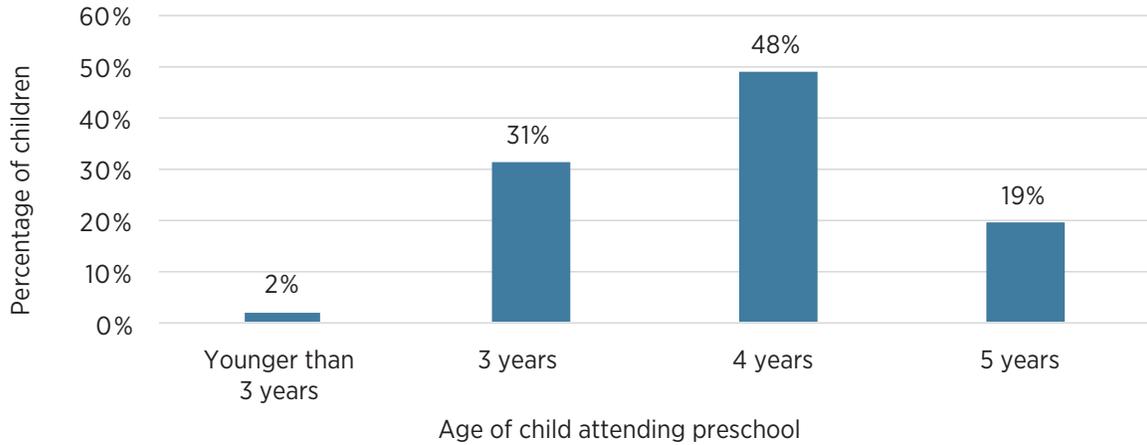
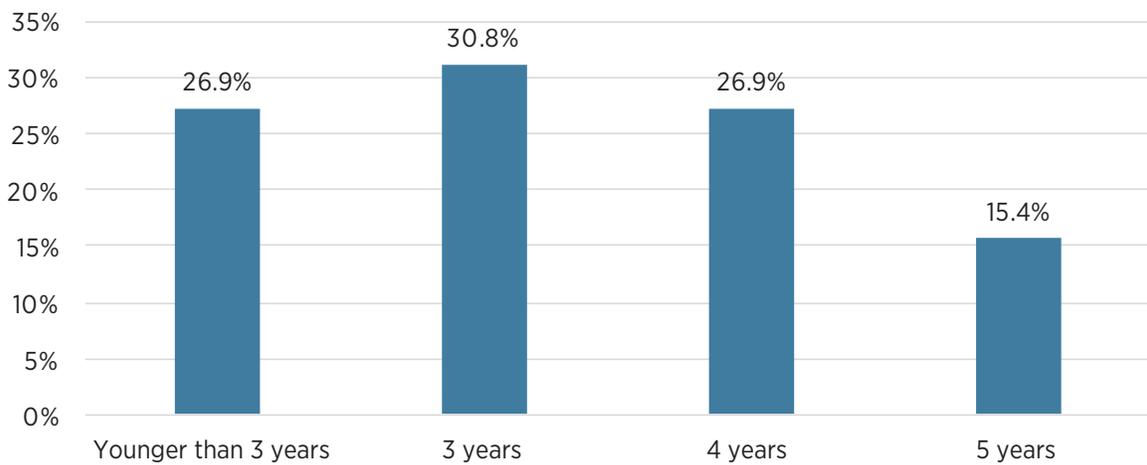


Figure 7. Age of the younger child in the household attending preschool





## 5.0

## Children's Participation

### Children's Participation in Preschool and Other Early Childhood Arrangements and Programs

This section examines enrolment in preschool, the frequency and duration of participation in preschool, and enrolment in other child care arrangements.

Unlike the long waiting lists many parents experience when trying to find a full-day child care space, 81.7% of respondents said they were able to secure a preschool space when they wanted it. Overall, 54.4% of respondents indicated that they had not put their child on a waiting list for preschool.

#### 5.1 Time Spent in Preschool

Children can usually be enrolled in preschool for up to two years before they start kindergarten, with the preschool “year” often starting in September. Thirteen percent of children had been enrolled for under six months, compared to 47% enrolled between six months and one year, and 40% enrolled for more than a year. Since the survey was conducted in April 2019, the 13% of children enrolled in their preschool for less than six months would have started later than September. This suggests that their preschools were not operating at full capacity, or that there had been some turnover during the year.

The average number of hours per week children participated in their main preschool program was 10, with a range from 1.5 to 20.

Children attended their main preschool anywhere from one to six days a week, with the greatest number attending for five days. Only six children attended one day a week and two attended six days a week; the latter for a preschool that includes a Saturday language class as part of one preschool program.

As to be expected, the average number of hours children spent in a preschool program was strongly related to the number of days they attend, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Children’s participation in their main preschool by number of days and hours per week**

Days per week	Percent of children	Median hours per week
One or two	23.7%	5.0
Three	25.1%	8.3
Four	12.5%	10.0
Five or six	38.6%	15.0

Interestingly, children in households with a parent at home full time were more likely to attend five or six days/week than those in households with all other work situations. Table 7 shows the number of days per week children participated in their main preschool arrangement, by the parents’ work situation.

**Table 7. Child’s participation in preschool by parents’ work situation**

Days per week child enrolled in preschool	All parents work full-time	One works full-time, one part-time	One works full-time, one at home full-time	Other work situations
One or two	20.9%	29.1%	23.5%	21.4%
Three	24.3%	28.2%	22.0%	26.5%
Four	15.7%	11.8%	9.1%	14.3%
Five or six	39.1%	30.9%	45.5%	37.5%

Children attended anywhere from one hour to four hours per session, with a median of 2.5 hours. Morning sessions began as early as 8:15 a.m. and ended as late as 1:15 p.m. Afternoon sessions began as early as 12:00 noon and ended as late as 4:30 p.m. Morning sessions were more common, representing 72% of children.

While there were modest trends in hours of attendance by parents’ work situation and household income, the differences by language spoken at home and by the auspice of the preschool were somewhat greater, as shown in Tables 8 through 11.

**Table 8. Hours per week spent in main preschool arrangement, by parents’ work situation**

Hours per week spent in preschool	All parents work full-time	One works full-time, one works part-time	One works full-time, one at home with children	Other work situations
Under 7.5	23.1%	26.6%	23.5%	21.4%
7.5 to under 12.5	34.2%	42.2%	33.3%	40.8%
12.5 hours or higher	42.7%	31.2%	43.2%	37.8%

Children in households in the lowest income categories, attended somewhat more hours than children in households in higher income categories, possibly due to the availability of the Affordable Child Care Benefit for lower income families.

**Table 9. Hours per week spent in main preschool arrangement, by household income**

Hours per week spent in preschool	Under \$50,000	\$50,000 to less than \$100,000	\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	\$150,000 and higher
Under 7.5	24.0%	26.3%	29.5%	20.2%
7.5 to under 12.5	32.0%	37.4%	33.3%	38.2%
12.5 hours or higher	44.0%	36.4%	37.1%	41.6%

Children attending a for-profit preschool spent more hours per week in preschool than those using attending a non-profit preschool.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 10. Hours per week spent in main preschool arrangement, by preschool auspice**

Hours per week spent in preschool	Non-profit preschools	For-profit preschools
Under 7.5	25.3%	15.2%
7.5 to under 12.5	38.4%	29.1%
12.5 hours or higher	36.2%	55.7%

As Table 11 shows, children in households where a language other than English was usually spoken attended preschool for longer hours than those in households that primarily spoke English.

**Table 11. Hours per week spent in main preschool arrangement, by language usually spoken at home**

Hours per week spent in preschool	English only	Cantonese or Mandarin	Other languages
Under 7.5	28.9%	19.6%	19.8%
7.5 to under 12.5	42.3%	27.1%	37.1%
12.5 hours or higher	28.9%	53.3%	43.1%

Eighty-two percent of children attended preschools that operated 10 months a year, and 12% attended preschools that operated 12 months a year. The remaining 5% attended preschools that were open for a different number of months, ranging from eight to 11 months a year. Eighty-one

<sup>1</sup> Note that caution should be used in interpreting the results by auspice, as the response rate from respondents using for profit preschools was considerably less than those using non-profit preschools.

percent of those who attended a preschool that was open for 12 months attended during the summer months. As Table 12 shows, children in families with one parent at home full-time or in “other” work situations were more likely to attend a preschool open 12 months a year than those in families with other defined work situations; however, children in families where all parents worked full-time were more likely to attend during the summer months.

**Table 12. Children’s enrolment in preschools open 12 months per year, and children’s participation in the summer months, by work situation**

	All parents work full-time	One works full-time, one part-time	One works full-time, one at home full-time	Other work situations
Children enrolled in a preschool open 12 months/year	10.4%	6.4%	15.2%	17.2%
Children enrolled in a 12-month program who attend during the summer months	92.9%	62.5%	80.0%	82.4%

Respondents were asked if the oldest (or only) child attending preschool, also attended a second preschool; 15.2% indicated that their child did attend a second preschool. Attendance at a second preschool was unrelated to parental work situation or use of other child care arrangements.

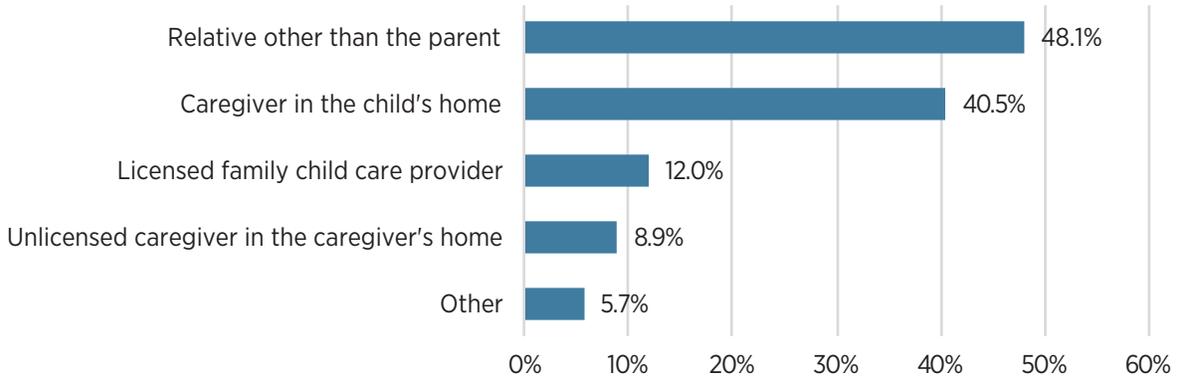
Six percent of respondents had a second child enrolled in preschool; of these, 74.1% indicated that the younger child attended the same sessions as the older child.

“ He goes 9-12 to (preschool A) all 5 days a week, also on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday he goes to (preschool B) 12:45 to 3:15. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons we pay for 3 hours of babysitting. ”

## 5.2 Children’s Participation in Other Regular Child Care Arrangements

Overall, 34.8% of respondents indicated that their child in preschool also regularly attended another child care arrangement. As Figure 8 shows, the most common other child care arrangement was by a relative other than a parent, followed by a caregiver in the child’s home.

Figure 8. Other regular child care arrangements, for children with a second arrangement



As Table 13 shows, using a second regular arrangement was seven times more likely for families where all parents work full-time than for families with one parent working full-time and one at home full-time, reflecting their relative availability for parental care.

Table 13. Children enrolled in another regular child care arrangement by parents’ work situation

	All parents work full-time	One works full-time, one part-time	One works full-time, one at home full-time	Other work situations
Child attended another regular child care arrangement	63.8%	49.1%	9.1%	20.4%

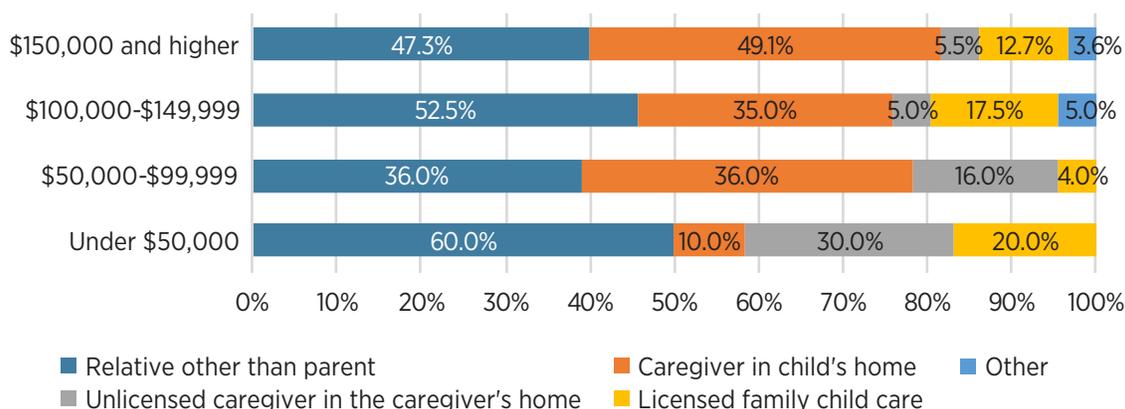
There were also distinct patterns in the use of other child care arrangements by household income and by the main language spoken at home. As Table 14 shows, the higher the household income, the more likely the child attended another regular child care arrangement.

Table 14. Children enrolled in another regular child care arrangement by annual household income

Annual household income	Under \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 and higher
Percent of children attending another regular child care arrangement	13.2%	27.6%	37.7%	62.5%

Figure 9 shows that families in the highest income quartile were more likely to use a caregiver in the child's home, and those in the lowest income group were more likely to use relative care (other than a parent).

**Figure 9. Type of regular other arrangement by annual family income**



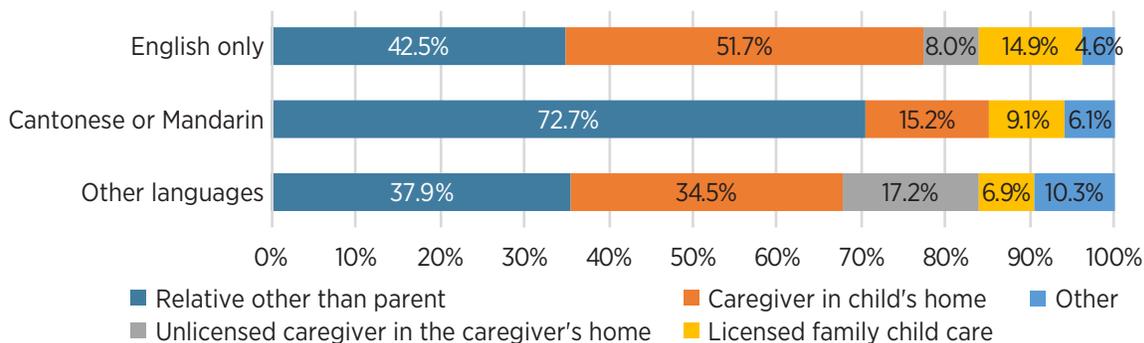
Families in households where only English was spoken were the most likely to attend another regular child care arrangement, as Table 15 shows.

**Table 15. Children enrolled in another regular child care arrangement by main language spoken at home**

	English only	Cantonese or Mandarin	Other languages
Percent of preschool children attending another regular child care arrangement	44.3%	31.1%	24.9%

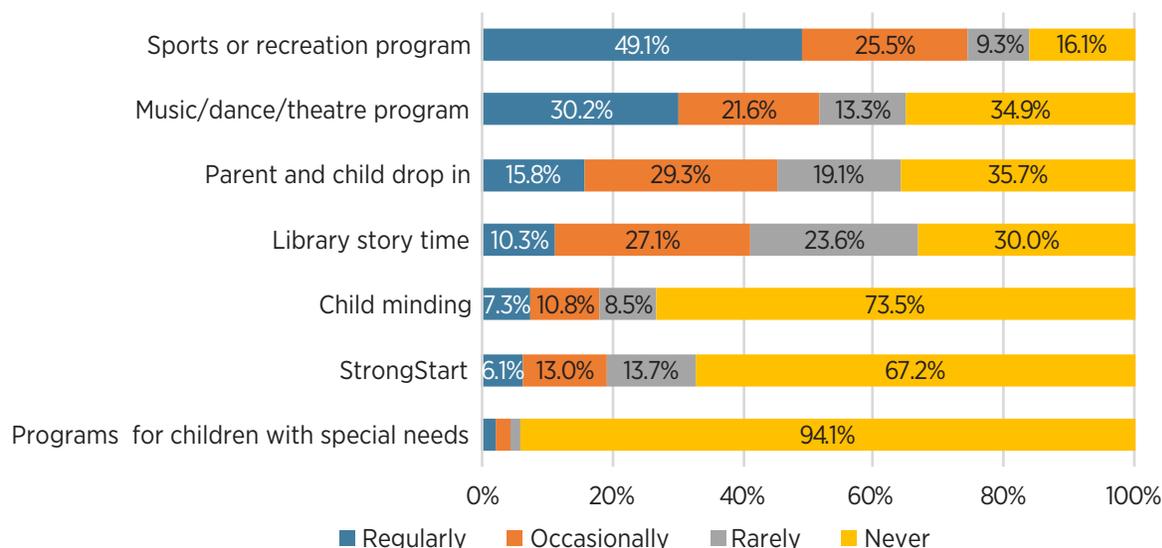
Figure 10 shows that families who lived in households where Cantonese or Mandarin was spoken were very likely to use care by a relative as a regular second arrangement, while the most common second arrangement for English-speaking households was a caregiver in the child's home.

**Figure 10. Children in types of regular child care arrangements by main language spoken at home**



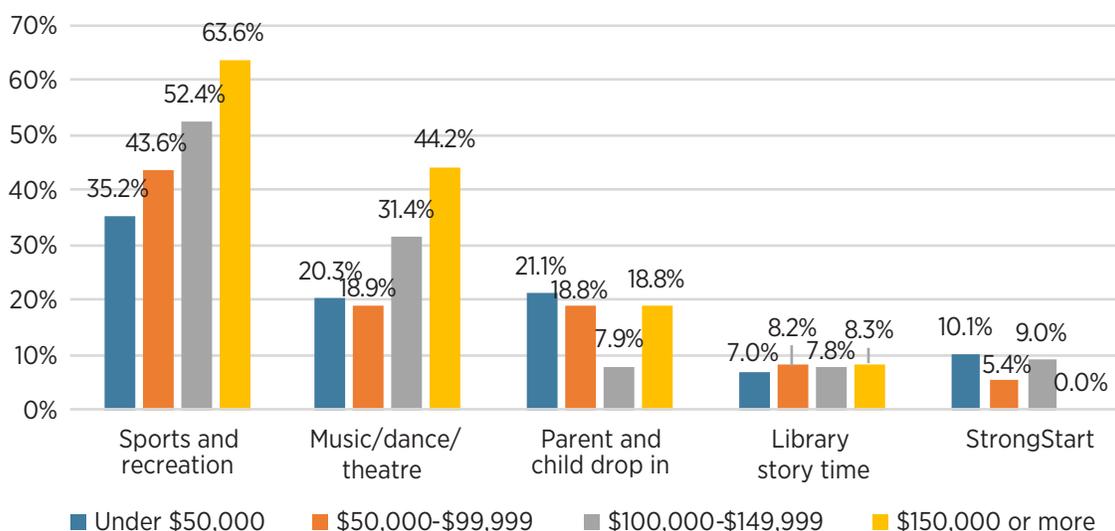
Respondents were asked about their preschool-attending children’s participation in other community programs in the past 12 months. As Figure 11 shows, children attended a number of different programs, the most common of which were sports or recreation programs, used regularly by almost half of the children, and occasionally by another 25%. Music/dance/theatre programs were only other type of program used either regularly or occasionally by the majority of children.

**Figure 11. Frequency of children’s participation in community programs by type of program**



A higher percent of all children regularly participated in sports and recreation programs than in other community programs, regardless of the household income. However, as Figure 12 shows, for both sports and recreation programs, and for music/dance and theatre programs, there was a strong income gradient.

**Figure 12. Children who regularly participated in community programs by annual household income**





## 6.0 Parents' Experiences with Preschool

This section examines the reasons parents choose preschool, their satisfaction with the preschool and other child care arrangements, their preferred child care arrangements, and how much they paid for preschool and other child care arrangements.

### 6.1 Reasons for Using Preschool

Respondents were asked to rank the top three reasons why they use preschool. In the online survey, the nine reasons were listed randomly for each respondent, to guard against any biases due to order of presentation. As Table 16 shows, the top reasons given for choosing preschool was for child development purposes, followed by preparation for school, and then for respite from parenting.

**Table 16. Parents' top three reasons for enrolling their children in preschool**

Reasons for enrolling children in a preschool program	First Reason	Second reason	Third reason
For child development purposes, such as socialization	46.6%	29.8%	6.0%
To help prepare child for school	29.6%	37.2%	10.4%
To have a break from parenting responsibilities	4.0%	8.1%	25.1%
Cannot afford full-time child care	3.8%	3.4%	5.5%
Cannot find full-time child care	3.2%	1.1%	5.5%
No need for full-time child care	1.7%	3.0%	11.7%
Do not want to use full-time childcare	1.5%	3.4%	5.7%
Able to get a government subsidy	1.5%	0.6%	3.8%
Particular supports for special needs child	0.6%	0.4%	1.5%
Other reasons	1.5%	0.4%	5.3%

As a way of combining the three ranks, responses were weighted (with the first reason given a weight of 3, the second reason a weight of 2 and the third reason a weight of 1) and then rescaled with highest weighted reason set at 100. As Figures 13, 14 and 15 show, the top weighted reason was for child development purposes. This held true, regardless of parental workforce participation, household income, the number of weekly sessions the child attended, and whether or not the child attended other child care or early child development programs. The only instance where it was not the first reason, was among respondents with annual household incomes below \$50,000. In that case, preparing children for school had the highest weighted score, at 102 .

**Figure 13. Top five reasons (weighted)for using preschool by household income**

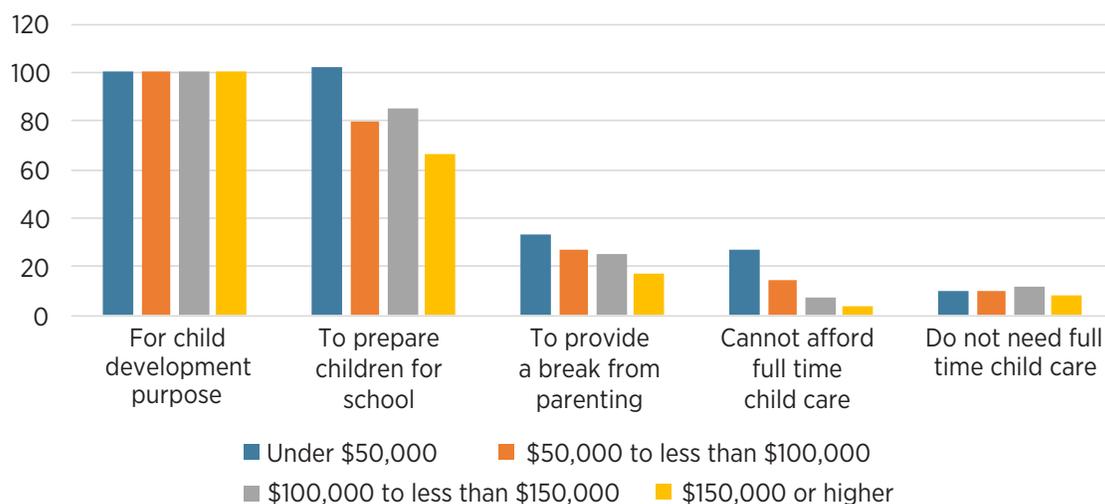


Figure 14 shows that households with one parent working full-time and one at home full-time caring for children had relatively high weighted scores compared to other types of households for two of the reasons: preparing children for school and providing a break from parenting.

**REASONS FOR USING PRESCHOOL:**

“ Currently I’m off on maternity leave which allows me to put my older child in a part time program allowing him to prepare for school— usually though we are desperate for full time care and cannot find it. ”

“ ...to give my child better independence, so she is comfortable, not always with her parents but comfortable with other caregivers. ”

Figure 14. Top five reasons (weighted) for using preschool by family work situation

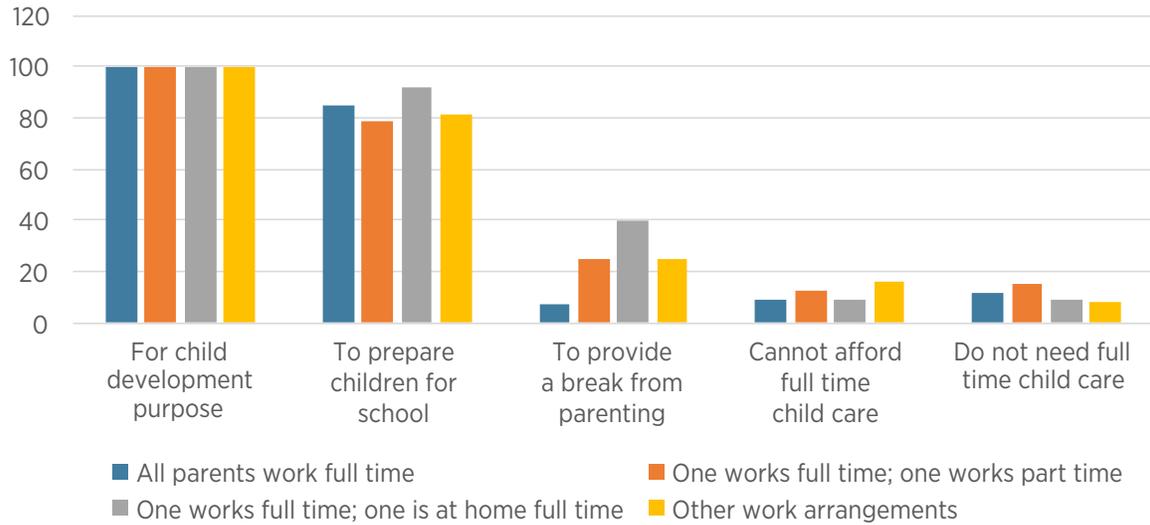
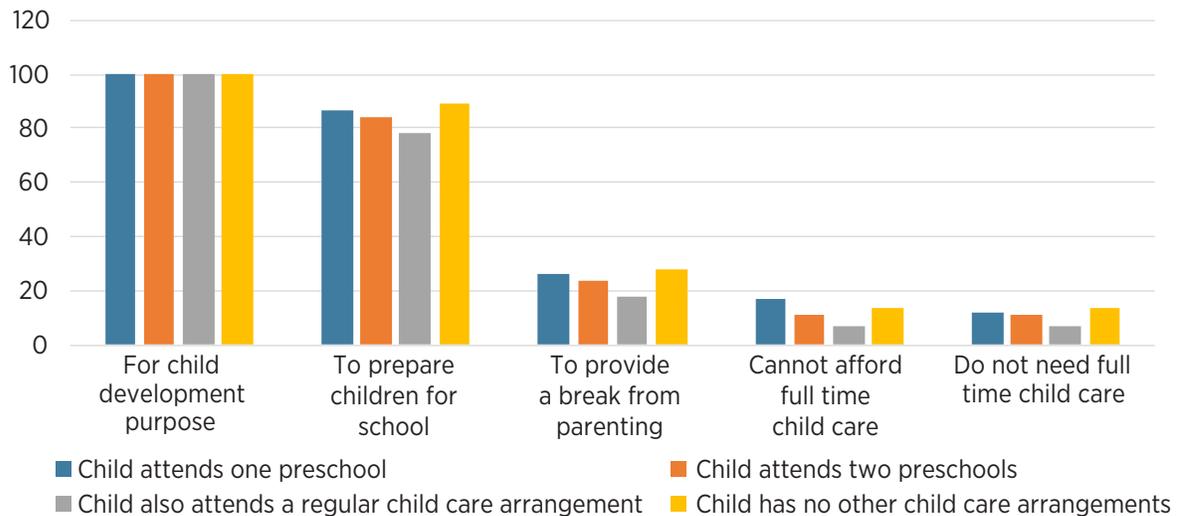


Figure 15 shows that respondents who used other regular child care arrangements in addition to preschool were less likely to use preschool to prepare children for school and to get a break from parenting than respondents who did not use other child care arrangements.

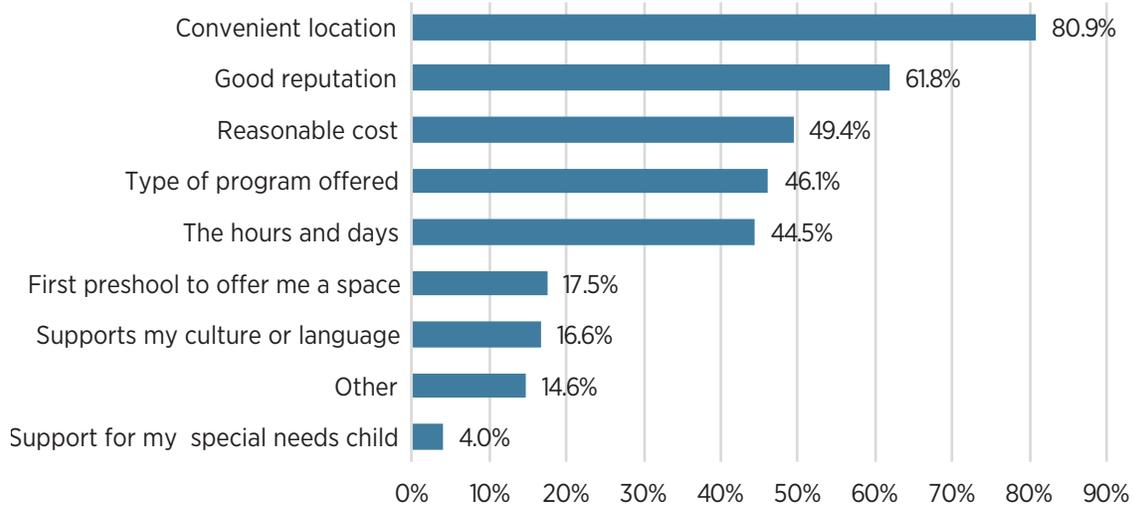
Figure 15. Top five reasons (weighted) for using preschool by preschool and other regular child care arrangements



“ I did not find a full-time daycare that fit my part-time working needs with similar programs the preschool offers. ”

Figure 16 shows the main reasons all respondents gave for choosing their particular preschool. The main reasons given were convenient location and the reputation of the preschool.

Figure 16. Reasons given for parents choosing their particular preschool



“Other” reasons given included older siblings had previously attended the preschool, friends’ children attended, characteristics of the staff, and connections with the elementary school.

Five percent of respondents (N=24) indicated that they had a child in preschool with special needs. The most frequently noted special needs were related to Autism Spectrum Disorder and speech delays. Respondents were asked about their experience in finding appropriate care for their child with special needs. Responses were mixed, ranging from challenges in getting their child’s needs met to comments about excellent support.

“ Following his diagnosis, the preschool he attended last year did not accommodate his needs, refused to allow outside support, and denied his entry for the following year and as a consequence we have filed a Human Rights Complaint. (Our current) preschool has been so supportive of our son and family, has welcomed all outside support, and has gone above and beyond to accommodate his needs. ”

## 6.2 Satisfaction with Preschool and Other Early Childhood Arrangements

In an effort to better understand how parents felt about their preschool arrangements, rather than asking an overall satisfaction question, parents' satisfaction was considered from two types of questions:

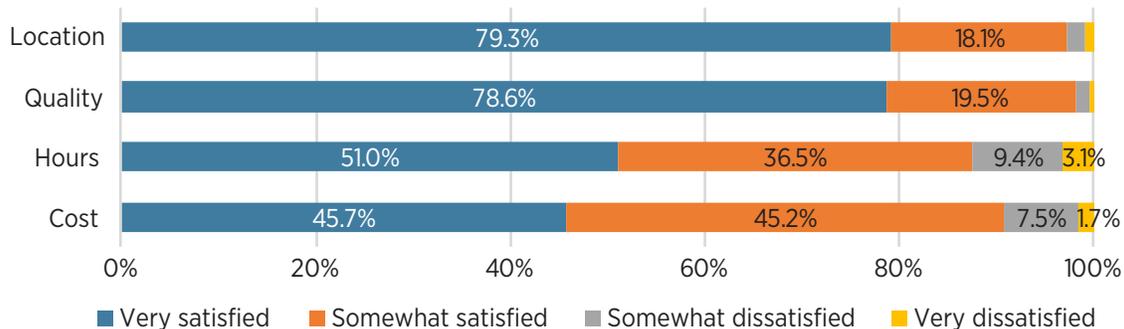
- General satisfaction ratings for four aspects of their current preschool arrangements
- Open-ended questions about what they liked best about their preschool and anything they would like to change.

Respondents were also asked how likely they would be to use full-time child care under a number of different hypothetical conditions.

### 6.2.1 Satisfaction with the child's preschool program

Parents were asked to rate, on a four-point scale, their satisfaction with the quality, location, hours and cost of their preschool (or main preschool if their child attended more than one). Figure 17 shows high satisfaction levels with each of the four aspects. Highest levels of satisfaction were reported for the location of the preschool, with 97.4% of respondents reporting that they were very or somewhat satisfied. Lowest satisfaction was reported for the cost of preschool, the only category where less than 50% were very satisfied with the cost; however, 90.9% reported being very or somewhat satisfied.

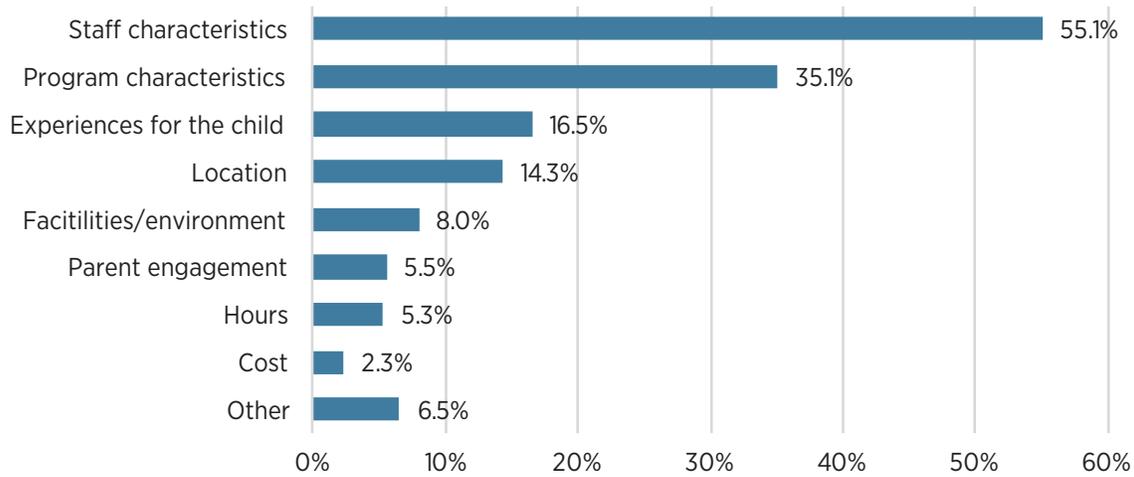
Figure 17. Parental satisfaction with four aspects of their preschool arrangements



### 6.2.2 What parents liked best about their child's preschool and what they would like to change

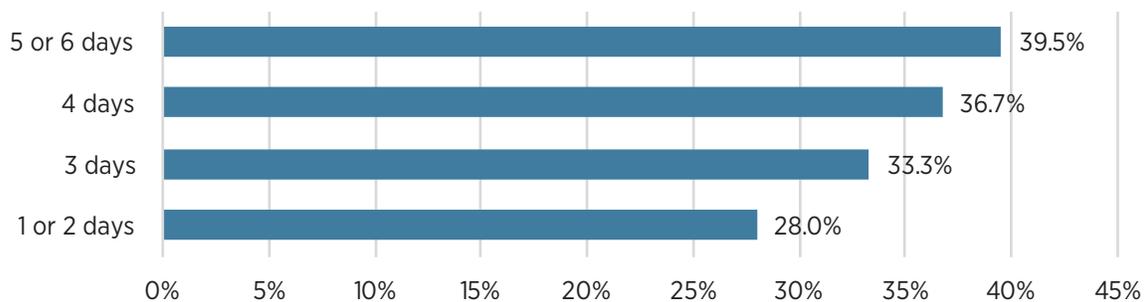
Respondents were asked an open-ended question about what they liked best about their current preschool arrangement. The comments were then coded and grouped into eight main categories. Most of the comments related to quality, with more than half of the respondents mentioning staff characteristics. Figure 18 shows what parents like best about their current or main preschool arrangement.

**Figure 18. What parents liked best about their preschool arrangement**



There were a few significant differences in what parents liked best about their preschool arrangements among different user sub-groups. Figure 19 shows that program characteristics were noted more frequently as the number of days per week the child attended preschool increased. This suggests that the more frequently a child attends preschool, the more the pedagogical approach and types of activities offered are appreciated by parents. Program characteristics were noted less frequently by parents living in households with one parent at home full-time than for other types of family work arrangements (see Figure 20).

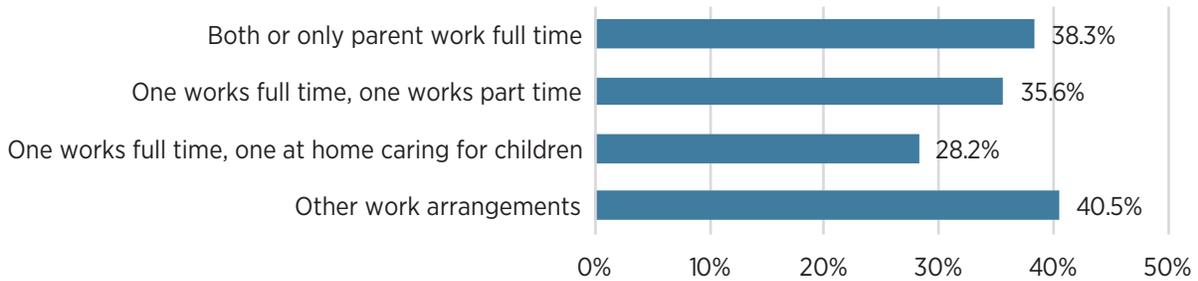
**Figure 19. Parents noting program characteristics among what they liked best about their preschool, by the number of days per week their child attended**



We love the teachers and all of what my son learns. He has made lots of good friends with the help of the teachers. The location and facilities are amazing and they go out frequently. I also think it is great that they are open during the summer and during spring break.

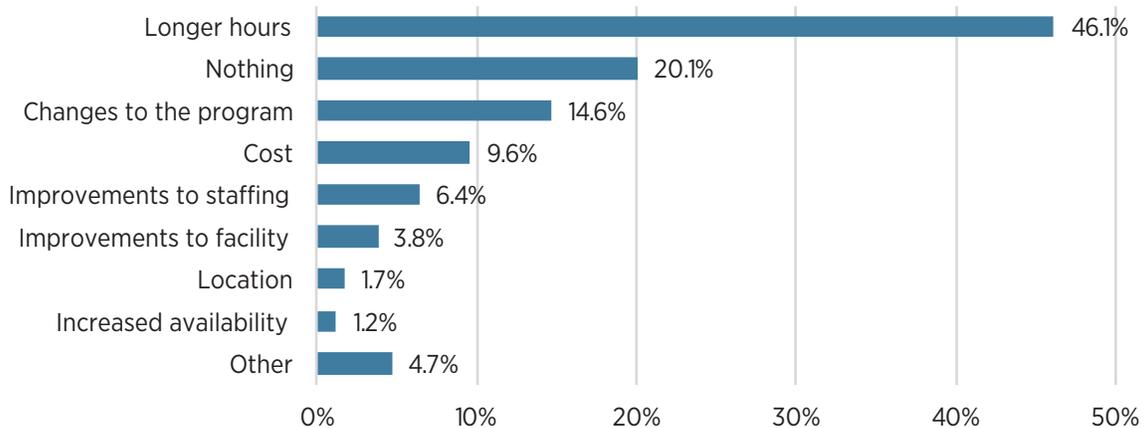


**Figure 20. Parents noting program characteristics among what they liked best about their preschool, by parental work arrangements**



When parents were asked what they would like to change about their current preschool arrangement, the hours were by far the most frequently mentioned aspect. The comments ranged from wanting the preschool to open a half an hour earlier, to offering full-time hours. A number of parents said they would like full-time hours, but not “daycare,” suggesting that they perceived what was offered in a preschool program as substantially different from full-day child care. Besides the issue of hours, there were few aspects of the preschool that parents wanted to change; in fact changing “nothing” was the second most mentioned comment. Changes to the program was a distant second in what parents would like to change; this ranged from comments about a desire for a more diverse curriculum, greater emphasis on “academics” and more field trips, Figure 21 shows the most frequently mentioned aspects of what parents would like to change about their preschool arrangement.

**Figure 21. What parents would like to change about their main preschool arrangement**



I would love to see more hours available as I know our daughter would benefit from attending longer and for more days.

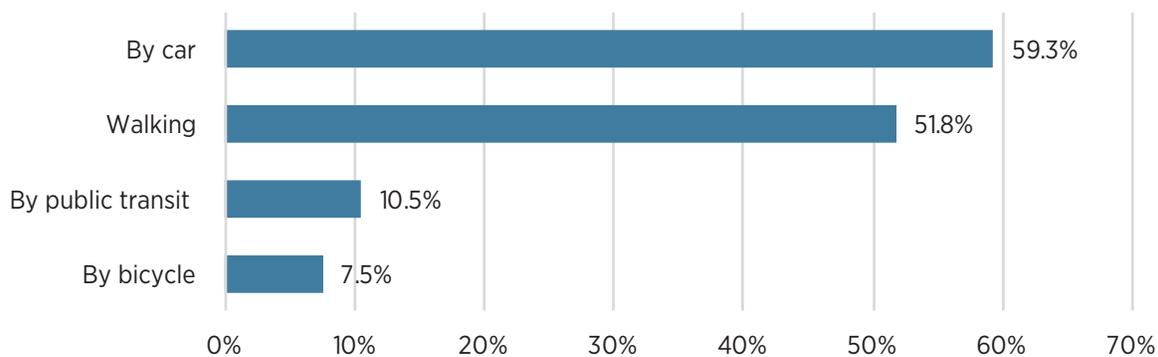


There were no notable differences in responses by parental work situation, household income, use of other child care arrangements or the number of days the child attended preschool. However, there were differences between respondents with one child and those with more than one. Wanting longer hours was mentioned by 38.8% of respondents with one child, compared to 49.2% with two or more children.

### 6.3 How Children Get to Preschool

Convenient location was the top reason given by parents for choosing their particular preschool, and more parent indicated that they were “very” satisfied with the location of their preschool than other aspects. Parents were asked how their child typically got to preschool. As Figure 22 shows, more parents indicated that they drove compared to other modes of transportation; however, more than 50% indicated that they walked. Some parents indicated more than one mode of transportation was regularly used, which explains why the percentages add to more than 100%.

Figure 22. How children usually get to preschool



“

I would like to be able to send my child for full days. It will be difficult for us to have him attend next year when I’m back at work from maternity leave and can no longer do all pickups and drop-offs.

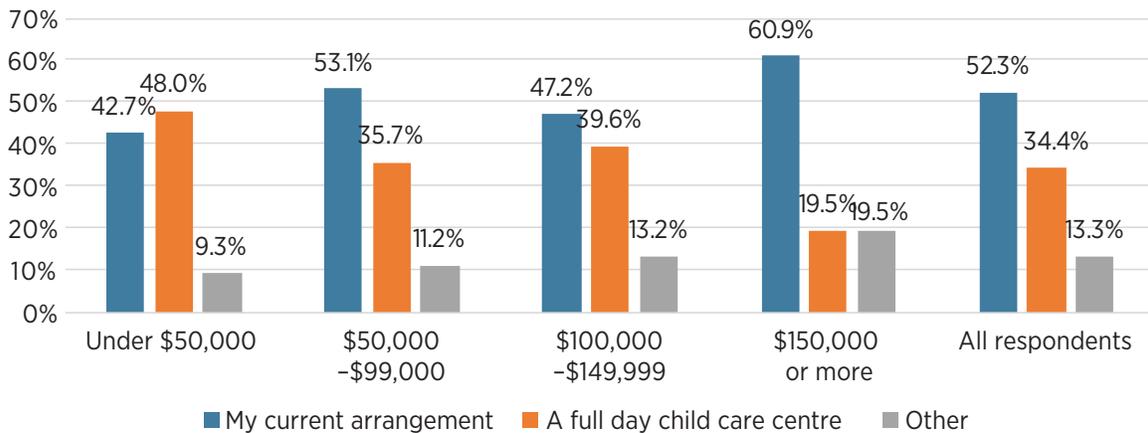
”

## 6.4 Preferred Arrangements

Respondents were asked what their preferred arrangements for their preschool children would be, if it was available at a cost they could afford. While approximately half indicated that they would keep their current arrangement, a third said they would prefer a full-time child care centre; the remaining 13% of respondents preferred a variety of other arrangements (relatives, licensed and unlicensed family child care, care in the child’s home). A few parents noted that they would prefer their current arrangements if it was full-day, or for longer hours.

There were few differences in preferred arrangement by the number of children in the household, or whether or not the child had multiple arrangements, but there were differences by household income and work arrangements. Figure 23 shows that those in the highest income quartile were more likely to want to keep their current arrangements and less likely to want a full-time child care space than those in the lowest income group. Parents in the lowest income group may perceive that the cost of care is barrier to participation in full-day child care if they are not aware of access to the Affordable Child Care Benefit, or they may not be able to get a space but cannot afford other paid options.

Figure 23. Preferred arrangement for preschool children by household income and overall



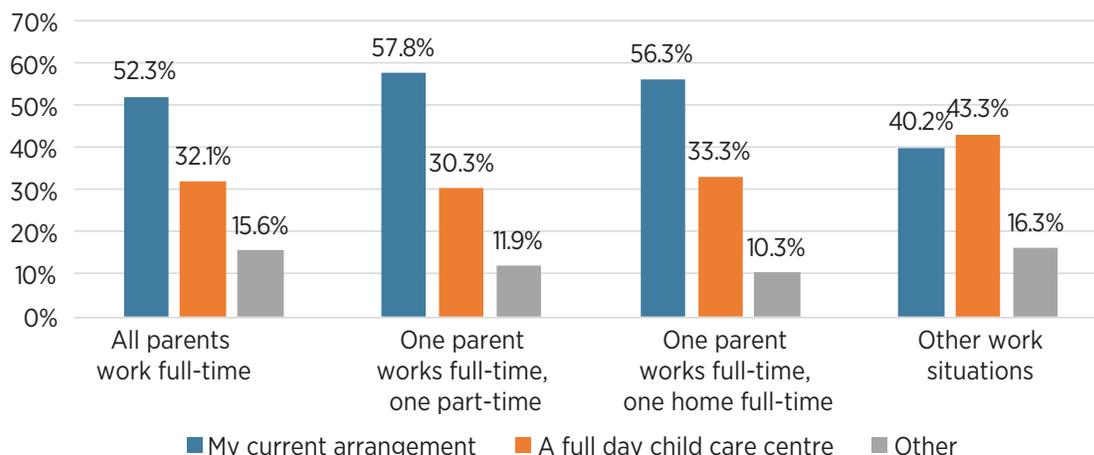
Preschool hours no longer suit the needs of working families.

Preschools use a lot of space in the city that should instead be used for full-time daycare or after school care. The only people that use preschool are those that can afford nannies or not to work. Our child is only registered in preschool because we could not access full-time daycare. As a result, I work at night when my partner returns.



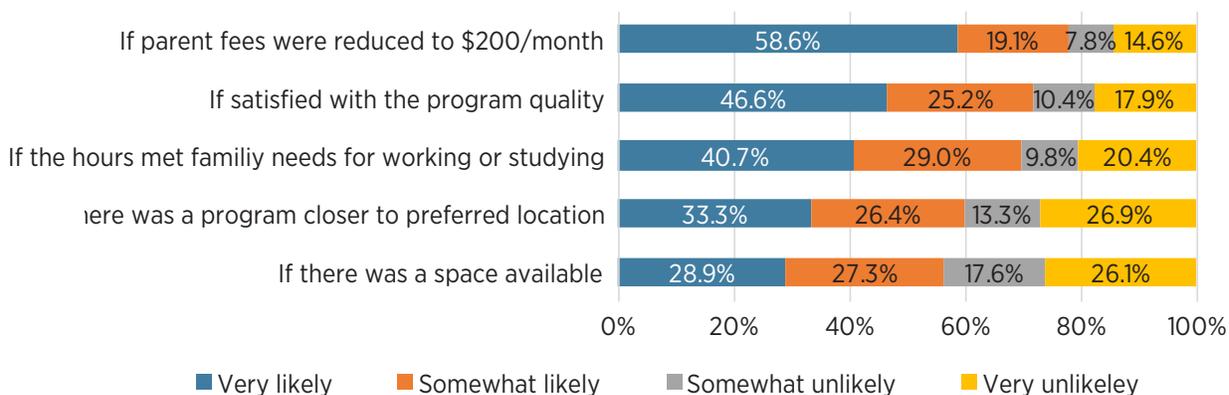
Figure 24 shows that families with “other” work situations (where there is no parent working full-time) were less likely to prefer their current arrangements and more likely to prefer a full-time child care centre, than those in work categories where at least one parent is working full-time.

**Figure 24. Preferred care arrangements by family work situation**



Given the recent steps taken by British Columbia to reduce parent fees and provide more full-day child care spaces, respondents were asked how likely they would be to change their child’s arrangements to full-day licensed child care under a number of different hypothetical conditions. While a slim majority of all parents indicated that would be “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to change to full-day child care under any of the conditions noted, 77.7% would be likely to change if fees were reduced to \$200/month, compared to 56.2% if there was an available space. Figure 25 shows the how likely parents said they would be to change to a full-time child care space if certain conditions were met.

**Figure 25. Respondents indicating how likely they would be to change to change to full-time child care under certain conditions**



As Table 17 shows, parents in the lowest income group were the most likely to indicate that they would change to full-time child care if any of the conditions were met. Parents in all income groups were more likely to change to full-time child care if fees were reduced to \$200/month than under any of the other conditions.

**Table 17. Respondents “very likely” to change their child care arrangements to full-day child care under certain conditions by income group**

Condition	Under \$50,000	\$50,000 to less than \$100,000	\$100,000 to less than \$150,000	\$150,000 or higher
If there was a space available	45.2%	34.2%	28.8%	22.1%
If there was a program closer to preferred location	49.3%	32.6%	26.0%	25.6%
The program hours met family’s need for working or studying	56.0%	40.2%	39.8%	29.8%
If satisfied with quality of the program	60.3%	45.7%	42.3%	37.2%
If fees were reduced to \$200/month	69.9%	60.8%	58.7%	46.4%

As Table 18 shows, families where languages other than English were the primary language spoken at home, were more likely to say they would change to full-time child care than those where only English was spoken.

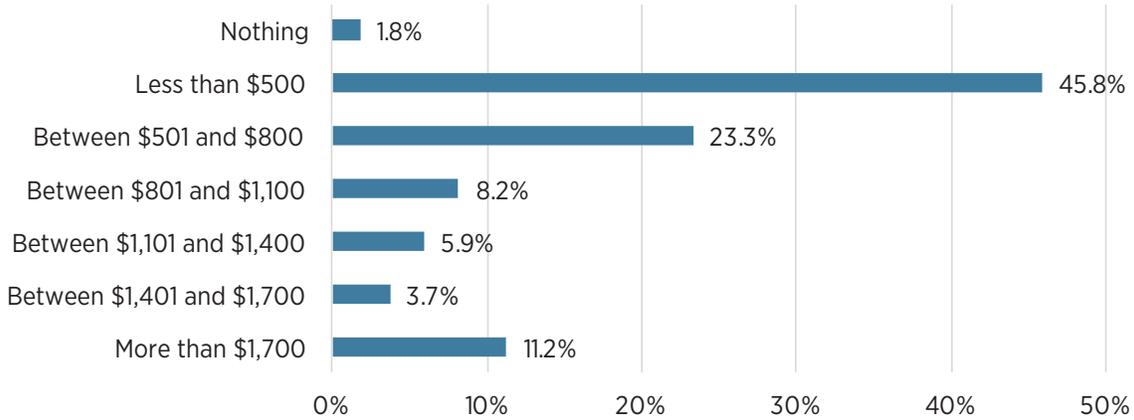
**Table 18. Respondents “very likely” to change their child care arrangements to full-day child care under certain conditions by language spoken at home**

Condition	English only	Cantonese or Mandarin	Other languages
If there was a space available	23.1%	32.4%	34.5%
If there was a program closer to preferred location	24.1%	37.9%	43.2%
The program hours met family’s need for working or studying	32.1%	44.2%	52.7%
If satisfied with quality of the program	37.1%	56.6%	54.1%
If fees were reduced to \$200/month	51.5%	62.9%	67.9%

## 6.5 How Much Parents Paid for Preschool and Any Other Child Care Arrangements

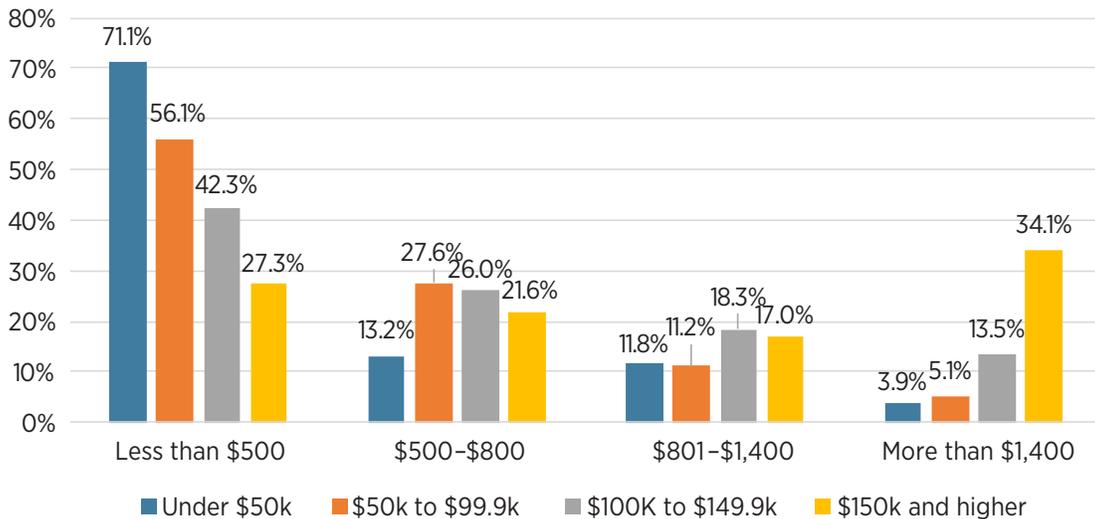
Respondents were asked how much they and/or their spouse paid in total for preschool and any other regular child care arrangements, out of their own pocket, for all children in the household, in an average month (not including any government subsidy or other financial support). As Figure 26 shows, amounts ranged from nothing to \$4,500/month, with the 47.6% paying less than \$500.

Figure 26. Amounts families paid for preschool and other child care arrangements for all children in the household



As would be expected, Figure 26 shows that families with lower annual incomes, generally paid less per month in preschool and child care fees than those with higher incomes.

Figure 27. Monthly amounts paid for preschool and other child care arrangements for all children in the household, by income group



Overall, 20.9% of respondents indicated that they received support for their preschool fees through the Affordable Child Care Benefit (formerly child care subsidy), 65.5% did not receive support and 20.9% were unsure. Surprisingly, only 47.2% of respondents in households with annual incomes under \$50,000 reported receiving the benefit, though most would be eligible. Those who indicated that they did not receive the benefit were asked the reasons why – a significant percent indicated that they had not heard of it. Table 19 shows the reported reasons why respondents did not receive the benefit.

**Table 19. Reasons reported for not receiving the Affordable Child Care Benefit by annual household income**

	Under \$50K	Between \$50k and \$99.9k	Between \$100K and \$149.9k	\$150k and higher
Had not heard of the benefit	37.0%	49.1%	16.2%	14.1%
Preschool fees are affordable	14.8%	15.1%	14.9%	11.5%
Too much effort to apply	14.8%	5.7%	4.1%	0.0%
Family income is too high	11.1%	32.1%	77.0%	85.9%
Other	33.3%	17.0%	4.1%	1.3%

## 6.6 Final Respondent Comments

At the end of the questionnaire respondents were given an opportunity to provide further comments on their preschool and child care arrangements, and they had a lot to say. Most comments were about the need for full-time child care and the high cost of care, as well as support for part-time preschool options.

- 1. Please make it affordable for everyone! The childcare situation in Vancouver is beyond absurd.*
- 2. Pre school doesn't prepare for school – 2 or 3 days a week does not prepare kids to be at school everyday for at least 6 hours! Pre school should be everyday, just like school!*

*Six months before we moved to Vancouver from Saskatoon we applied for every daycare we could find. We called many a month before we arrived, and often heard we were 800 or 1,000 on the list. Through extreme persistence we got a spot at a licensed home daycare. All of our kids have gone there. Luckily it is good, because we really have no other options. None of the other daycares we've applied for have ever called us (three years later).*

*When not on maternity leave my work is casual in nature. It is very difficult to find childcare that works for a changing schedule. We use a drop-in childcare center that is fantastic but unfortunately it does not qualify for the childcare subsidy because it is "flexible."*

*Our childcare arrangements only work as my in-laws help take care of our child. However, if illness or another unexpected matter were to happen we would have a very difficult time finding a place to provide care and be able to afford it. Currently I work 7am-3pm and my husband works 4pm-12am. We work these hours intentionally to maximize the time with our child but also the reality of not finding a place and/or affordability.*

*It's a shame that so many valuable workers are unable to go back to work because they cannot find child care, or because it's so expensive it doesn't make sense to take it. It is also a shame that so few employers support working less than 5 days a week for professionals. In other countries I've lived, it was easy to work four days a week and maintain professional responsibilities and roles.*

*While I have the financial resources to have an in-home caregiver, there is an enormous need for full-time licensed day care in this city. For my second child, I did place myself on a wait list for day care at the time he was born. His name only came up FOUR years later . . . during that time we had to make other arrangements. I could have gone back to work full time had I been given a day care spot when he turned one. The lack of reliable day care is preventing many parents from fully contributing.*

*Preschool is an essential part of the early child care and education provision in Vancouver, it is not an inferior option to full-time care. Please continue to support this type of setting in our city, in an effort to keep Vancouver liveable for families.*

*Preschool has been a conscious choice on our part, rather than a response to lack of daycare. I applaud the effort to expand daycare options. However, please do not conflate enrolment in preschool with a lack of daycare options — preschools provide something unique for children and importantly, parents and families, to build strong and healthy communities.*

*The teachers are very supportive and genuinely enjoy being around the children. The school does not have a high turnover of staff which is very important to me. The classroom environment is always positive. The communal snacks are healthy and promote healthy eating. The teacher/child ratio is reasonable. An inside gymnasium is available for days when the weather isn't appropriate.*

*The teachers are amazing. It is a very welcoming environment and they really try to have a community feel, going on walks and exploring the area. They foster a culture of kindness and it's wonderful.*



## 7.0

## Summary and Conclusions

### **Our sample size of 472 parents allows relatively precise estimates, but results may have some bias**

Statistically speaking, a sample of 472 parents should allow results that are precise plus or minus 4.3 percent, 95 times out of 100, for the finite population of parents who could be using preschools in Vancouver. However, as is the case for most surveys, our respondents are self-selected, and so our results should be treated with caution, given the possibility of having a biased sample.

### **Preschools are serving a diverse range of families**

Fifty-eight percent of respondents were born in Canada; 57.5% spoke English at home, and the remaining 42.5% spoke a total of 26 other languages, with Cantonese and Mandarin being the most prevalent. Respondents were in households spread fairly evenly across all income groups, with just over 20% earning less than \$50,000/year and 24% earning \$150,000 and more.

### **The majority of preschool parents are in the paid labour force**

There is often a perception that preschool primarily serves families with a parent at home full-time. While one-third of respondents were at home full time, close to 60% were in the paid labour force. One-third worked full-time and 27% worked part-time. Of those who worked outside the home, 22% had an irregular work schedule with hours that varied. In two-parent households, 85.3% of partners work full-time and 6.7% worked part-time.

### **A third of the preschool children were in other regularly scheduled child care arrangements in addition to preschool**

The use of other child care arrangements increased with family income. Thirteen percent of families with incomes of less than \$50,000 regularly used other child care arrangements, compared to 63% of those earning \$150,000 or more. Parents in the lowest income group were most likely to use relative care, while those in the highest income group were most likely to use a caregiver in the parents' home.

### **Most parents were satisfied with their preschool program in terms of location, quality, hours and cost**

Convenient location was a main reason for choosing a particular preschool for 81% of respondents and a higher proportion indicated that they were “very” satisfied with the location of their preschool than other aspects. However, in an open-ended question about what they liked best about their preschool, the most frequently mentioned aspect was staff characteristics.

### **Many parents are unaware of the Affordable Child Care Benefit or that they may be eligible for it**

Not surprisingly, a higher proportion of families in the lower income categories received the Affordable Child Care Benefit than those in the higher income groups. However, only 47% of families earning \$50,000 or less and 31% earning between \$50,000 to less than \$100,00 received the benefit. On the basis of income most of these families would be eligible for a full or partial subsidy, regardless of their work situation, yet 48% of families with incomes of less than \$50,000 and 81% with incomes between \$50,000 to less than \$100,00 were either unaware of the benefit or believed they weren't eligible. Given that fewer than 4% of families were ineligible due to their status in Canada, more information provided by preschools could ensure eligible were aware of the benefit and how to apply.

### **Most respondents were able to access preschool when they wanted to and were generally satisfied with the cost**

More than 80% of parents were able to enrol their children as soon as they wanted to use it. Of those who were not able to enrol their child when they wanted, 62% waited less than six months. Unlike the lengthy waits for full-day child care, preschool appears to be accessible for most parents. A number of parents noted that they were on multiple full-day child care waiting lists but were either never offered a space, or were offered a space after three or four years. Even though more families appear to be eligible for the Affordable Child Care Benefit than received it, and satisfaction with cost was lower than for other aspects of the preschool, more than 90% indicated that they were “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with the cost.

## **More parents who wanted a different arrangement preferred a full-time child care centre over all other forms of care combined, including care by relatives.**

**Half of the respondents indicated that they preferred their current arrangements over other forms of care, but more than one-third expressed a preference for a full-day child centre**

More parents who wanted a different arrangement preferred a full-time child care centre over all other forms of care combined, including care by relatives. Parents in the lowest income group were less likely to prefer their current arrangement than those in the highest income group (43% compared to 61%) and more likely to prefer a full time child care centre (48% compared to 20% of those in the highest income group). When asked how likely they would be to use full-time child care under different hypothetical scenarios, more than half of all respondents said they would be “very likely” to use full-time child care if it was available at \$200/month, including 70% of parents earning under \$50,000/year.

**When asked what they would like to change about their preschool, longer hours was by far the most frequently mentioned aspect. The comments about the wish for longer hours ranged from asking for an additional half-hour per session to full days.**

There is room to expand the number of preschool spaces without developing additional facilities. According to the CCOF data, 48% of the preschools were operating at less than 75% of their potential enrolment, when taking into account their licensed capacity, maximum sessions and total number of enrolled days. While some may be choosing to operate below maximum capacity, it appears that there is potential to increase the enrolment without necessarily increasing the number of facilities. This is an important consideration for the City of Vancouver as it plans for child care expansion. In preschools where there is chronic under-enrolment it may be worth examining the potential to convert some spaces to full-time child care, or to explore the possibility of increasing the length of sessions as many families expressed a desire for longer hours in the preschools.

**There are no readily available data to estimate the total number of children enrolled in preschool**

We had hoped to determine the “coverage” of preschool spaces for children 3 to 5 years, that is to learn how many individual children are enrolled in preschool, through analysis of CCOF data provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. While the data enable us to estimate whether a facility was fully enrolled, but not the number of unique children enrolled. In order to estimate the number of children enrolled a brief survey of preschool operators asking for the number of children enrolled at a given point in time as well as any vacancies would be required. It is possible that Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre could collect this information at the same time they do their regular fee survey.

# Appendix A. The Vancouver Preschool Users Survey

## Introduction

With support from the City of Vancouver, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre is conducting the first ever survey of parents whose children attend a preschool program in Vancouver.

## We Need Your Input

Preschool programs are an important part of early learning and child care services. We need to learn more about why and how families use preschool programs. This will help us better understand what parents want and need as the Government of British Columbia works to increase the supply and affordability of licensed early childhood services.

## Confidentiality

The information that you provide will remain completely anonymous and will only be available to the project researchers. Your information will only be used to group results across different program types and neighbourhoods. No individuals or preschools will ever be identified.

## Time to complete the survey

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. It can be completed on your computer, tablet, or smart phone. If you are unable to complete the survey at one time, you can return to it later on the same device.

## Enter your name for a draw!

Parents who complete the survey may enter their names for a draw for one of five gift cards of \$100 to My Little Green Shop. My Little Green Shop (<https://www.mylittlegreenshop.com/>) is a Vancouver-based online store for children's toys, clothing, accessories, and more.

## Thank you in advance

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey. Please complete it by **April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019**.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email: [vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com](mailto:vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com).

### 1. Do you have any children currently attending a licensed preschool program in Vancouver?

A licensed preschool program offers part-day care (no more than 4 hours per day) for children from age 30 months to school entry.

No  Yes

2. **What is the name of the preschool program?** We need this information only to locate the area in the city where the preschool is located.

---

3. **How many children live in your household? Type in a number for each age group.**

\_\_\_\_\_ children aged under 3

\_\_\_\_\_ children aged 3 to 5

\_\_\_\_\_ children aged 5 to 12

\_\_\_\_\_ children aged 13 or older

4. **What is your work/study situation? Check all that apply.**

- I work full time (30 or more hours per week)
- I work part time (under 30 hours per week)
- I am currently on maternity or parental leave
- I am unemployed and looking for work
- I am at home full time caring for my children
- I am a student
- I am retired
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. **When do you do your paid work? Check one only.**

- Days     Evenings     Nights     It varies

6. **Do you have a spouse/partner living in your household?**

- No     Yes

7. **What is your spouse/partner's work/study situation? Check all that apply.**

- Works full time (30 or more hours per week)
- Works part time (under 30 hours per week)
- Is currently on maternity or parental leave
- Is unemployed and looking for work
- Is at home full time caring for my children
- Is a student
- Is retired
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. **(If yes) When does your spouse/partner do his/her paid work? Check one only.**

- Days     Evenings     Nights     It varies

Please answer the following questions based on your child you is CURRENTLY attending preschool. If you have more than one child attending preschool, answer for the oldest child (even in the case of twins).

You will be given the opportunity later to answer these questions for your other children who are currently attending preschool.

**9. When was this child born?** Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Month: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Does this child also currently attend a second licensed preschool?**

No  Yes

**11. What is the name of this second licensed preschool?**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions for the preschool where this child attends for the most hours in a week. Click "Next" to proceed.

**12. Which days of the week does this child attend preschool? Check all that apply.**

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday

**13. What are the starting and ending times?**

Same times every day Starting time \_\_\_\_\_ Ending time \_\_\_\_\_

**If the starting and ending times are not always the same, please describe how they are different.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**14. How many months per year is this preschool open?**

- 10 months
- 12 months
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Does this child attend the preschool at all during the summer months?**

No  Yes

**16. How long has this child been enrolled in this preschool?**

- Less than six months
- Six months to one year
- More than one year

**17. Were you able to enroll this child in this preschool as soon as you wanted to use it?**

No  Yes

**18. How many months ahead of time was this child on the preschool's wait list?**

- My child was not on a wait list
- Less than three months
- Three to six months
- Seven months to one year
- More than one year

**19. How long did you have to wait?**

- Less than three months
- Three to six months
- Seven months to one year
- More than one year

**20. Do you use any other regularly scheduled care arrangements for this child, in addition to attending preschool? Do not include occasional babysitting.**

- No  Yes

**21. (If yes) What are the other regular care arrangements for this child, other than parental care? Check all that apply.**

- A licensed family child care
- Relative (other than parent)
- An unlicensed caregiver in their home
- A caregiver in my home
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**22. Do you have a second child in your household who is also currently attending preschool?**

- No  Yes

(if yes)

**23. When was this second child born? Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Month: \_\_\_\_\_**

**24. Does this child attend for the same days per week and the same hours per day as the first child?**

- No  Yes

**25. Which days of the week does this child attend preschool? Check all that apply.**

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday

**26. What are the starting and ending times?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**27. If the starting and ending times are not always the same, please describe how they are different.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**28. Do you have a third child in your household who is also currently attending preschool?**

No  Yes

(if yes)

**29. When was this second child born?** Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Month: \_\_\_\_\_

**30. Does this child attend for the same days per week and the same hours per day as the first child?**

No  Yes

**31. Which days of the week does this child attend preschool? Check all that apply.**

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday

**32. What are the starting and ending times?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**33. If the starting and ending times are not always the same, please describe how they are different.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**34. Do any of your children currently attending preschool have a special need or disability?**

No  Yes

**35. What is the nature of the special need, disability or additional required supports?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**36. How has this affected your experience with finding and using appropriate child care?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**37. Why are you using this particular preschool? Check all that apply.**

- It has a good reputation
- I like the particular program it offers (e.g., Montessori, Reggio-inspired, play-based)
- It supports my language or culture
- It provides appropriate support for my child with special needs
- The location is convenient
- I like the hours and days offered
- The cost is reasonable
- It was the first preschool to offer me a space

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**38. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of this preschool program?**

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hours of care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**39. What do you like most about your preschool program?**

**40. What would you like to change about your preschool program?**

**41. In the past 12 months, how often have your children who attend preschool participated in each of the following community programs?**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Regularly	N/A
Parent-child drop in programs	<input type="radio"/>				
StrongStart	<input type="radio"/>				
Library story times	<input type="radio"/>				
Child minding	<input type="radio"/>				
Sports or recreation programs	<input type="radio"/>				
Music/dance/theatre programs	<input type="radio"/>				
Programs specifically for children with special needs	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>				

**42. What are the main reasons you use preschool? Choose the top three.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ To help prepare my child(ren) for school
- \_\_\_\_\_ It gives me a break from my parenting responsibilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ For child development purposes such as socialization
- \_\_\_\_\_ For particular supports for my child with special needs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because I do not want to use full-time child care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because I do not need full-time child care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because I cannot find full-time child care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because I cannot afford full-time child care

\_\_\_\_\_ Because I am able to get a government fee subsidy (i.e., the Affordable Child Care Benefit)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other reason

**43. If you chose “Other reason” please specify.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**44. How do you typically get to and from preschool? Check all that apply.**

- Walk
- By bicycle
- By car
- By public transit
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**45. What would be your preferred arrangement for your preschool children, assuming a space was available, and it was offered at an affordable price? Check one only.**

- My current arrangements
- A full-day child care centre
- A licensed family child care
- A relative (other than a parent)
- An unlicensed caregiver in their home
- A caregiver in my home
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

British Columbia has committed to improving child care in our province. Steps are being explored to reduce parent fees, provide more full-day spaces, and improve the wages that child care educators are paid.

**46. How likely is it that you would change your child’s arrangements to full-day licensed child care, if...**

Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely
----------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------------

- a. There was a space available for your child or children
- b. There was a program closer to your preferred location
- c. The hours met your family’s needs for working or studying
- d. You were satisfied with the quality
- e. Parent fees were reduced to \$200 per child per month
- f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**47. In total, how much do you and/or your spouse pay out of your own pocket in total in an average month for preschool and any other child care arrangements, for all your children?**

- Nothing
- Less than \$500
- Between \$500 and \$800
- Between \$801 and \$1,100
- Between \$1,101 and \$1,400
- Between \$1,401 and \$1,700
- More than \$1,700

**48. Please specify the monthly total amount.**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**49. Are you receiving support for your preschool fees through the Affordable Child Care Benefit (previously known as child care subsidy)?**

- No
- Yes
- Not sure

**50. Why are you not receiving this support?**

- I haven't heard about this benefit.
- Preschool fees are affordable.
- Too much effort to apply.
- Our family income is too high (not eligible, or only for a small amount).
- Other (please specify)

**51. Where do you live? Check one only.**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Vancouver                    | <input type="radio"/> Coquitlam      |
| <input type="radio"/> Burnaby                      | <input type="radio"/> Port Coquitlam |
| <input type="radio"/> Richmond                     | <input type="radio"/> Port Moody     |
| <input type="radio"/> North Vancouver              | <input type="radio"/> Delta          |
| <input type="radio"/> West Vancouver               | <input type="radio"/> Surrey         |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify _____) |                                      |

**52. What are the first three characters in your home postal code? (e.g., V6R).** This information gives us a general geographic sense of where you live in Vancouver, relative to where preschools are located.

\_\_\_ \_ \_

**53. Last year, what was your total household income, before taxes and deductions?**

- Under \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$124,999
- \$125,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

**54. Do you identify as Indigenous? Check all that apply.**

- No
- Yes, First Nations
- Yes, Métis
- Yes, Inuit
- Yes, Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

**55. Which of the following citizenship categories applies to you? Check one only.**

- Canadian citizen
- Permanent resident
- Non-permanent resident
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**56. Which of the following immigration categories applies to you? Check one only.**

- Born in Canada
- Came to Canada as an economic immigrant
- Came to Canada as an immigrant sponsored by family
- Came to Canada as a refugee
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**57. Which language(s) are most often spoken in your home? Check all that apply.**

- |                                    |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean        | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French    | <input type="checkbox"/> Persian/Farsi | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hindi     | <input type="checkbox"/> Punjabi       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian       |   |

**58. If you have any other comments about your child care situation that you would like to share, please include them here.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**59. Do you want to enter the draw for one of five \$100 gift cards from My Little Green Shop? My Little Green Shop ([mylittlegreenshop.com](http://mylittlegreenshop.com)) is a Vancouver-based online store children's toys, clothing, accessories, and more.**

- No  Yes

**60. Please provide us with your name and email address, so we can contact you if you are prize winner. We will not link this information to any of your previous answers on the survey.**

Name:

Email address:

# Appendix B. Parent poster

## VANCOUVER PRESCHOOL PARENT SURVEY

**We need your input!**

How do preschools support Vancouver families?

**Help us understand future needs**

as improvements are made to the supply and affordability of early care and learning services in BC

**WIN A PRIZE!**

You could win one of five \$100 gift cards to My Little Green Shop

**TAKES 10 MINUTES!**

On your computer, smart phone, or tablet

**100% ANONYMOUS**

No individuals will be identified in the survey

**THANK YOU** in advance for participating in the first ever survey of parents whose children attend a preschool program in Vancouver.

**START THE SURVEY NOW!**

Visit this link:  
[surveymonkey.com/r/van-preschool](https://surveymonkey.com/r/van-preschool)  
or  
**scan the QR code**  
(just use your phone camera, and the survey will pop up!)

**APRIL 30, 2019!**

Please complete the survey by

Conducted by Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, with support from the City of Vancouver. Contact us at [vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com](mailto:vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com)



## 温哥华学前班 家长调查

**我们需要您的意见!**

学前班如何支持温哥华的家庭?

**请帮助我们了解未来的需求**

以更好地为BC省幼儿和早期教育服务的提供及可负担性做出改善

**赢得奖项!**

您有机会赢得 My Little Green Shop 的 5张 \$100 礼券的其中一张

**仅需 10 分钟!**

可在电脑、智能手机或平板电脑上完成

**100% 匿名参加**

没有人会在本调查中将您识别出来

**THANK YOU** 感谢您参加首次针对有孩子在温哥华上学前班的父母进行的调查。

**立即开始调查!**

请访问此链接:  
[surveymonkey.com/r/van-preschool](https://surveymonkey.com/r/van-preschool)  
或  
**扫描此二维码**  
(只需用手机摄像头, 调查即会弹出!)

**2019年4月30日!**

请速完成调查的截止日期是

本调查是在温哥华市的帮助下由 Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (西岸幼儿照护资源中心) 举办。请通过 [vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com](mailto:vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com) 与我们联系。



# Appendix C. Parent postcard

## VANCOUVER PRESCHOOL PARENT SURVEY

**We need your input!**  
How do preschools support Vancouver families?

**Help us understand future needs**  
as improvements are made to the supply and affordability of early care and learning services in BC

**WIN A PRIZE!**  
You could win one of five \$100 gift cards to My Little Green Shop

**100% ANONYMOUS**  
No individuals will be identified in the survey

**TAKES 10 MINUTES!**  
On your computer, smart phone, or tablet

**TURN OVER TO START THE SURVEY!**

Please complete the survey by **APRIL 30, 2019!**



With support from the City of Vancouver, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre is conducting the **first ever survey** of parents whose children attend a preschool program in Vancouver.

Preschool programs are an important part of early learning and child care services. **We need to learn more** about why and how families use preschool programs. This will help us better understand what parents want and need as the government of BC works to increase the supply and affordability of licensed early childhood services.

The survey is **anonymous**, and takes about **10 minutes** on your computer, tablet, or smart phone.

Parents who complete the survey may **enter to win** one of five \$100 gift cards to My Little Green Shop / [mylittlegreenshop.com](http://mylittlegreenshop.com)

THANK YOU in advance for participating in the survey.

### START THE SURVEY NOW!

**Go to this link:** [surveymonkey.com/r/van-preschool](http://surveymonkey.com/r/van-preschool)  
(A direct link was also emailed to you by your preschool)

or

**Scan the QR code**

(just use your phone camera, and the survey will pop up!)



Please complete the survey by **April 30, 2019**

**Questions?** Contact us at [vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com](mailto:vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com)

Conducted by Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, with support from the City of Vancouver



WCCRC

## 温哥华学前班 家长调查

**我们需要您的意见!**  
学前班如何支持温哥华的家庭?

**请帮助我们了解未来的需求**  
以便对BC省托儿和早期教育服务的提供及可负担性做出改善

**赢得奖项!**  
您可能赢得 My Little Green Shop 的五张 \$100 礼卡的其中一张

**100% 匿名参加**  
没有人会在本调查中识别出来

**仅需 10 分钟!**  
可在电脑、智能手机或平板电脑上完成

**翻到另一面 开始调查!**

请注意完成本调查的截止日期是 **2019年4月30日!**



在温哥华市的支持下，Westcoast Child Care Resource Center (西岸托儿资源中心) 正在对有孩子在温哥华学前班的家长进行首次调查。

学前教育计划是早期学习和托儿服务的重要组成部分。我们需要更多地了解有关家庭使用学前计划的原因和方式。这将有助于我们更好地了解父母的要求和需求，因为BC省政府致力于增加有执照的托儿服务的供应和可负担性。

本调查是匿名的，而且仅需 **10 分钟** 即可在电脑、平板电脑或智能手机上完成。

完成调查的家长可以参加 MyLittleGreenShop/mylittlegreenshop.com 的抽奖，赢得五张 \$100 元礼卡的其中一张。

感谢您参加首次针对有孩子在温哥华学前班的父母进行的调查。

### 立即开始调查!

**立即开始调查!** [surveymonkey.com/r/vanch-preschool](http://surveymonkey.com/r/vanch-preschool)  
(您的学前班也通过电子邮件给您发送了直接链接)

或

**扫描此二维码**  
(只用手机摄像头，调查即会弹出!)



请注意完成本调查的截止日期是 **2019年4月30日!**

**有疑问?** 请通过 [vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com](mailto:vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com) 与我们联系。

本调查在温哥华市的支持下由 Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (西岸托儿服务资源中心) 承办。



WCCRC

[Chinese Simplified]

## Appendix D. Preschool operator letter



March 28, 2019

Dear preschool operator,

With support from the City of Vancouver, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre is conducting an online survey of families whose children attend a preschool program in Vancouver. Through this survey, we will fill in existing knowledge gaps about this important part of the early learning and child care sector. As the Government of British Columbia implements their plans to make early learning and child care more available and affordable to families, we hope to learn more about parents' use of preschool programs.

The survey is being undertaken to find out how preschool programs support families, what additional child care arrangements families use (if any), and what child care choices would be ideal, if available. The information will assist the City in its commitment to help build a high quality, sustainable child care system.

We need your help to reach these parents. Please help us connect to the parents using your preschool program by:

1. Forwarding the parent email (sent as a separate email) to the families using your program;
2. Distributing information cards about the survey to the parents (you will be receiving these cards in the next few days); and
3. Putting up the survey poster (arriving in the same package as the information cards) on your bulletin board. The poster and the information cards contain a QR code that parents can use to access the survey, or they can use the link contained in the parent email.

The survey is available in English and in simplified Chinese.

In appreciation of your effort, if at least 10 parents from your preschool complete the survey, your preschool will be entered into a draw for one of five \$100 gift certificates to [My Little Green Shop](#). In addition to the gift certificates for preschools, there will also be five gift certificates for parents who have completed the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at: [vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com](mailto:vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com).

Thank you very much for your essential assistance.

Jane Beach and Barry Forer  
Project researchers

## Appendix E. Email reminder to operators

**Email header: THANK YOU & REMINDER: 2019 Survey of Vancouver Preschool Families**



Dear preschool operator,

Thank you for all of your help making your families aware of the Vancouver preschool parent survey. Without you, we would be unable to do this important research.

It is two weeks before the deadline, and so it is time to thank those who have already completed the survey, and to send a reminder to parents who have not yet gotten around to it. We are sending a parent reminder email to you today – please forward it to all of your families.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Barry Forer or Jane Beach, the project researchers, at [vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com](mailto:vanpreschoolstudy@gmail.com).

Thank you again for your ongoing help.

## Appendix F. Final reminder to operators

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