Connecting Eligible Families to Child Care

Washington State’s 2017 Working Connections Child Care Survey

Presented to the NAWRS 2017 Conference
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Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Working Connections Child Care, or WCCC, helps low-income families pay for child care while they work, meet WorkFirst participation requirements, or attend school through Basic Food Employment & Training.

When a family qualifies...

- the family chooses an eligible provider
- the state pays a portion of the child care cost
- the family pays a monthly copayment
Legislative Background

- Child Care and Development Fund established in 1990
- Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 introduces the 12-month eligibility period
- Washington’s Early Start Act of 2015 adds 12-month eligibility to WCCC effective in July 2016
Some eligible families never connect with a provider

1. Family applies for WCCC subsidy
2. Family is determined to be eligible for next 12 months
3. Family obtains care from a child care provider
4. State receives payment request from provider and issues payment

Why do some families stop here?
Our need for timely information
to accurately conduct our February caseload forecast…
to predict when WCCC may reach its caseload cap…
to inform our legislature’s biennial operating budget…

our solution… the WCCC Client Survey
Who isn’t using WCCC?

Lower income
Older children
Smaller families
Non-white

Note: N=7,079 not in paid status and 21,377 in paid status in September 2017. All results are statistically significant with p-value <.0001.

*Because demographic data come from TANF administrative data, a family size of 1 indicates child-only TANF cases.
Why do some eligible families not use WCCC?

$H_1$ Parents don't know they are eligible

$H_2$ Parents are having trouble finding a provider that works for them

$H_3$ Parents are choosing not to use subsidy because they don't need it
Survey Methodology

- Phone survey
- Piloted in Dec 2016
- Conducted Jan 6-19 2017
- Sample of 500 clients*
- DSHS field staff team
- 35% response rate
- 63% of respondents eligible** but not using subsidy
- Matched to WA administrative data for analysis

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*Sampling frame included individuals deemed eligible on/before August 31, 2016 and with an eligibility end date on/after September 1, 2016

**Respondents were considered eligible if still a Washington State resident with a child under 13 or a child under 19 with a disability
H₁ Parents don't know they are eligible

14% said “I didn’t know my family is currently eligible for child care subsidy”

Among this group... nearly all were working or in school
Parents are having trouble finding a provider

32% gave at least one **provider-related** reason for not using subsidy

- 22% lack of child care providers in my area
- 14% providers won’t accept children receiving subsidy
- 6% on a wait list for my preferred provider
- 22% providers aren’t available for my work schedule

Findings reflect **national trends** in the child care challenges facing low-income families.
Parents are choosing not to use subsidy because they don't need it.

Note! Respondents could choose more than one answer to this question.

53% said "I do not need child care right now".

34% gave at least one other reason for not using subsidy.
H₃ Parents are choosing not to use subsidy because they don't need it

Some respondents who say they don’t need care might **still** want to use subsidy

Of those who say they don’t need care…

**29%** were **still looking for care** from a licensed center or home provider, or from a license-exempt family, friend, or neighbor
Client had difficulty with the approval process for a family member, decided it was easier to pay her mom herself.

Client has tried several providers that won't accept her child because of his special needs.

Client’s child is going to school and just needs care in the summer.

Client is out of a job and would rather the subsidy be used by someone else who really needs it.

Client is not working right now, but has used subsidy in the past and loved it.
So what can we *conclude* from the WCCC survey...
H₁ Parents don't know they are eligible
H₂ Parents are having trouble finding providers that works for them
H₃ Parents don't need it

None of the three hypotheses entirely, or mostly, explains why some families don’t use subsidy
Our survey had a significant impact on policymaking in Olympia by disproving the theory that low awareness of the new eligibility policy explained lower than expected program use.
Washington State’s child care caseload trends mirror national trends

…which according to a January 2017 report by CLASP, are at historic lows
National caseload trends

Average Monthly Adjusted Number of Families and Children Served by CCDF
U.S. Total

Source: ACF Office of Child Care
Average Monthly Adjusted Number of Families and Children Served by CCDF
Washington State

Source: ACF Office of Child Care
Increasing access to child care means addressing the complex barriers that low-income families face.

- Limited resources
- Varying work schedules and nontraditional hours
- Low supply of quality care
- Lack of information and social networks to find care
- Time to search and arrange for care
- Children with special needs

Source: Urban Institute 2011
Thank you!

For questions, please contact:

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christina.mchugh@dshs.wa.gov

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest Child Age</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Size</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model $\chi^2$</td>
<td>506.70</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>28,122</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
For reference: Survey Questions

- Are you currently using child care subsidy from Washington? Yes/No
- Do you still live in Washington? Yes/No
- Do you have a child under age-13 living in your home? Yes/No
- Do you have a child under age-19 with special needs or disabilities living in your home? Yes/No
- I will read some statements, please tell me if any of these are true for you:
  - I didn’t know my family is currently eligible for child care subsidy
  - There is a lack of child care providers in the area where I live or work
  - Providers in my area won’t accept children receiving subsidy
  - I am on a wait list for the provider I want to use
  - Providers aren’t available for the schedule I work
  - I am not satisfied with quality of the providers available in my area
  - The cost of my childcare co-payment is more than I can afford
  - I am waiting for approval for a relative or someone who comes into my home to provide child care
  - Another parent or family member is now available to care for my children
  - I do not need child care right now
- Are there any other reasons you do not use child care subsidy?
- Are you looking for a licensed child care center or licensed family home provider? Yes/No
- Are you looking for care by a license exempt family, friend or neighbor provider? This could be a relative or someone who comes into your home. Yes/No
- Are you currently working or in school? Yes/No
- Are you in an approved WorkFirst activity? Yes/No
For reference: Main survey findings

Question: "We’d like to find out more about why you aren’t using child care subsidy right now. I will read some statements, please tell me if any of these are true for you..."

n=111 eligible respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I didn't know I was eligible</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitlisted for preferred provider</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local providers won't accept children with subsidy</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providers aren't available for my work schedule</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of providers near my home or work</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not need child care right now</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family member is now available to provide care</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-payment is too expensive</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting for approval of family or friend provider</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied with local provider quality</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 1: 32% selected at least one provider-related reason

Hypothesis 2: 53% selected the reason "I do not need child care right now"
For reference: Citations


Which eligible WCCC clients are more likely to use subsidy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Family Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Youngest Child Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>1 year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,760</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>2 years</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youngest Child Age</th>
<th>5 years</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>55%</td>
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**Probability of WCCC Subsidy Use Among Eligible Population**
Note: Results are predicted probabilities calculated using a logistic regression model of WCCC subsidy use in October 2016. The population consists of 28,122 individuals with an eligibility start date on or before August 31, 2016 and an eligibility end date on or after September 1, 2016.
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