



## FIRST CHILDREN'S FINANCE

Building stronger child care businesses

### **Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan for Child Care for Marion County, Iowa**

Prepared by First Children's Finance  
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## Introduction

In 2018, First Children's Finance was commissioned by Marion County Development Commission to conduct this *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan* for Marion County. The purpose of this project was to determine the current supply and demand for child care across Marion County, and to gain insight to any child care challenges experienced by the residents and workforce of the local communities.

A child care shortage is a community challenge that requires a community response. The challenge currently facing Marion County is how to increase the supply and availability of child care to meet the needs of the families and employers. As a result, a solution-based community planning process spearheaded by Marion County Development Commission and Pella Area Community & Economic Alliance was initiated. To assist with the process, a Child Care Steering Committee was formed. The primary role of this committee was to lead and inform the overall process, assuring quality and relevance of the resulting strategic plan.

First Children's Finance is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to increase the sustainability and supply of quality child care. First Children's Finance believes that access to quality early care and education is essential for all communities, and that early care and education is the foundation of individual success and the engine of regional economic growth. For more information, contact Heidi Schlueter, Regional Director [Heidi@FirstChildrensFinance.org](mailto:Heidi@FirstChildrensFinance.org).

## Executive Summary

For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they make. According to longitudinal research, the child care environment they choose will have lasting effects on their child. When there are not enough child care spaces in a community, finding *any* care is a challenge; and options for *quality* child care that meet the needs and preferences of families can be even more challenging.

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet each family's varying needs and preferences. The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available. Through a *Child Care Needs Survey* developed by First Children's Finance, it was determined that most parents want their child in a quality child care setting that is regulated by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

Iowa Department of Human Services data shows that as of February 2019 there were 1,223 child care spaces in Marion County for the estimated 2,318 children needing care. This shortage has made finding child care difficult for many families. Sixty-one percent (61%) of parents participating in the *Child Care Needs Survey* indicated they had difficulty finding care. The most common obstacles cited were the hours of child care providers not aligning with the parent schedules, lack of part-time options, and not being able to find openings for multiple children with the same provider.

First Children's Finance's Key Findings for Marion County are:

- Population Ages 0 to 9 Decreasing in Some Communities, Increasing in Others
- Marion County Parents are in the Labor Force and Need Child Care
- Parents Prefer Regulated Child Care Settings
- Median Family Incomes are Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold
- Child Care is Affecting the Labor Force
- Finding Child Care in Marion County is Difficult
- Marion County's Child Care Supply is Declining
- There is a Shortage of Child Care Spaces Across Marion County

The details of these key findings are contained in this report. To address the child care shortage, an inclusive process that gathered information and data from different perspectives was used. Local child care providers, school districts, employers, and community leaders participated in a series of strategic planning sessions to develop a vision for child care in Marion County, along with goals and implementation projects for each of 5 child care markets.

The following vision for child care in Marion County was developed through input and interactions with the Child Care Steering Committee and strategic planning participants. This vision will help guide the future of child care throughout Marion County.

- Marion County *children* will have access to programs that offer an enriching learning environment.
- Marion County *parents* will have a variety of reliable, quality, and safe child care options that meet their individual needs.
- Marion County *child care providers* will be supported and viable so they can meet the needs of families.

- Marion County *employers* will be engaged and invested in child care solutions.
- Marion County *community leaders* will advocate and provide resources for sustainable child care solutions.

### **Community Goals for Child Care**

There is not a “one size fits all” solution when it comes to child care. Each community has different needs, and each family has different preferences. The overall goal for Marion County is to make sure parents have access to child care. To address the shortage of child care spaces while attempting to meet the needs and preferences of the families in each child care market, the following goals were developed by the participants that attended the strategic planning meetings.

#### *Bussey Goal*

- Increase the number of quality child care spaces in Bussey.

#### *Knoxville Goal*

- Share and develop resources that will provide access to quality child care for Knoxville families.

#### *Pella Goals*

- Increase the number of quality child care spaces in Pella.
- Increase the child care center labor pool in Pella, through local training and partnerships.
- Make resources available for Pella families that do not qualify for Child Care Assistance, but still struggle to pay for child care.

#### *Pleasantville Goal*

- Use this *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan* to inform community leaders of Pleasantville’s child care needs.

### **Implementation Projects**

For each goal there is at least one implementation project. These projects have been developed through input and interactions with the Child Care Steering Committee and strategic planning participants, along with data and the research and analysis performed by First Children’s Finance.

#### *Bussey Implementation Projects*

- Establish new Registered Child Development Homes in the Bussey area.
- Expand the existing licensed child care center, Little Sabers.

#### *Knoxville Implementation Projects*

- Explore ways the Knoxville Chamber and its members can support families who need child care.
- Provide resources and educational opportunities related to child care to local employers.
- Engage local child care providers with the Chamber and the community.



#### *Pella Implementation Projects*

- Support the expansion effort of new and existing child care centers.
- Recruit and retain in-home child care providers.
- Explore options for offering the required training and work experience needed to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ locally.
- Provide resources and information to local employers on child care related benefits.
- Explore establishing an income-based child care tuition scholarship fund.

#### *Pleasantville Implementation Projects*

- Hold community-based conversations related to the expansion of child care in Pleasantville.

## The Need and Demand for Quality Child Care

### Market Area

Marion County is located in Central Iowa, just east of the Des Moines metropolitan area. The county seat is Knoxville. Also in the county are the towns of Bussey, Hamilton, Harvey, Marysville, Melcher-Dallas, Pella, Pleasantville, and Swan. To better identify child care gaps and needs, the county was divided into five markets. The Bussey market reflects data from the townships of Indiana and Liberty, including the incorporated communities of Bussey and Maryville; the Knoxville market reflects the townships of Clay, Knoxville, and Washington, including the incorporated communities of Knoxville and Harvey; the Melcher-Dallas market reflects the townships of Dallas and Franklin, including the incorporated community of Melcher; the Pella market reflects the townships of Lake Prairie and Summit, including the incorporated communities of Pella and Otley; and the Pleasantville market reflects the townships of Pleasant Grove, Red Rock, and Union, including the incorporated communities of Pleasantville and Swan. (See map on following page)

**Table 1: Child Care Market Areas**

<b>Market Area</b>	<b>Townships Included</b>	<b>Communities Included</b>
Bussey	Indiana Liberty	Bussey Hamilton Marysville
Knoxville	Clay Knoxville Washington	Knoxville Harvey
Melcher-Dallas	Dallas Franklin	Melcher-Dallas
Pella	Lake Prairie Summit	Pella Otley
Pleasantville	Pleasant Grove Red Rock Union	Pleasantville Swan

### Population

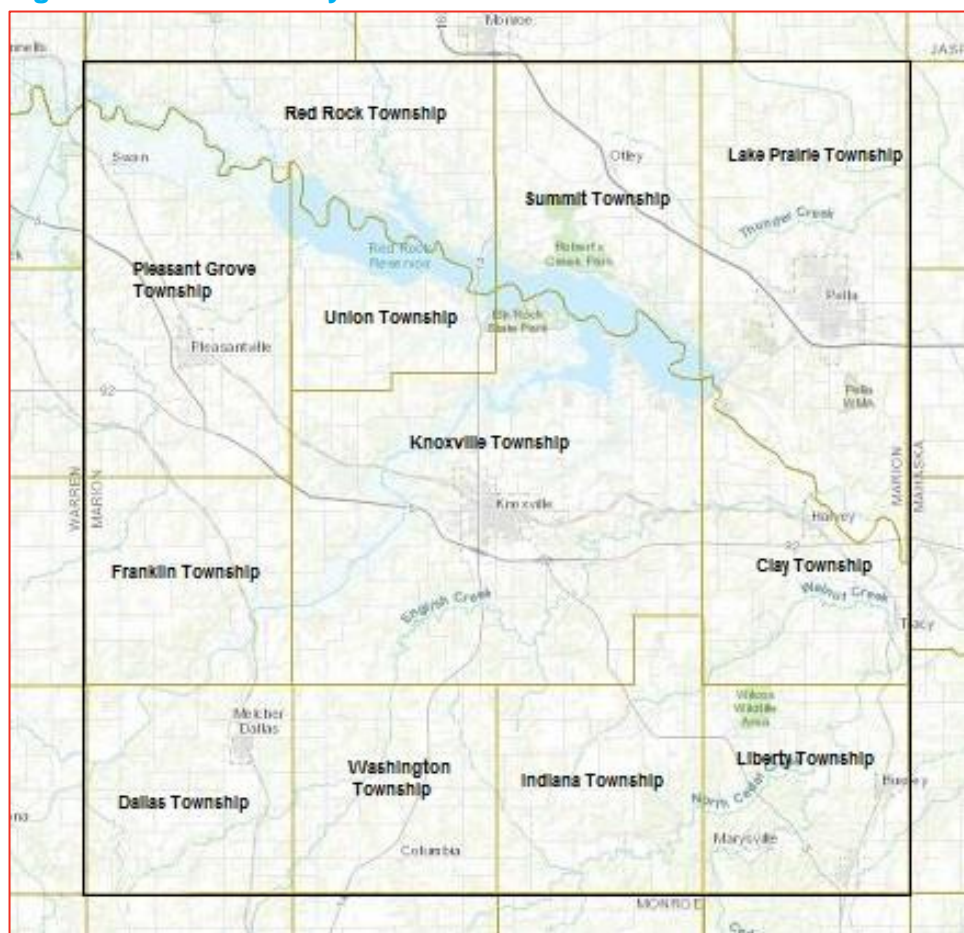
As of 2017, the estimated population of Marion County was 33,127. The county population has been increasing over the last several years. According to US Census Bureau data, the county has experienced a positive natural change (more births than deaths). In addition to natural change, migration influences the net population change. Marion County has been experiencing a gain from international migration over the last seven years, while domestic migration has been a mix with some years reflecting a net gain from domestic in-migration, while others show a net loss from domestic out-migration.

**Table 2: Net Population Change in Marion County<sup>1</sup>**

	Births	Deaths	International Migration	Domestic Migration	Net Change
2011	385	329	21	0	<b>+74</b>
2012	381	337	38	50	<b>+131</b>
2013	356	314	15	-125	<b>-70</b>
2014	373	318	44	92	<b>+169</b>
2015	381	322	14	-51	<b>+37</b>
2016	359	332	17	7	<b>+48</b>
2017	371	318	15	-111	<b>-44</b>

*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2011-2017)*

**Figure 1: Marion County Child Care Markets**



*Source: US Census Bureau, Retrieved, February 2019.*

When considering how many births may occur in an area and therefore how many children may need access to child care in the future, fertility rates can help. The number of births within each market in 2017 ranged from 28 to 192. Fertility data also shows how many women that gave birth are also in the labor force, low-income (below 200% of poverty), and received public assistance in the previous 12

<sup>1</sup> Data is not available on the township or community level.

months. The Pella market had the most annual births (173) and one of the highest percentages of women that gave birth that are participating in the labor force (90%). In the Bussey market, 100% of the women that gave birth are also in the labor force, while in the Pleasantville market only 42% of the women that gave birth were also in the labor force.

**Table 3: Fertility by Market, 2017**

	Women Age 15 to 50	With Births in Last 12 Months	With Birth and in Labor Force	With Birth and Below 200% Poverty	With Birth and Public Assistance in last 12 Months
Bussey Market	366	66	66 (100%)	13 (20%)	3 (5%)
Knoxville Market	2,392	91	80 (88%)	27 (30%)	0 (0%)
Melcher-Dallas Market	316	28	17 (61%)	8 (26%)	0 (0%)
Pella Market	3,350	192	173 (90%)	62 (32%)	0 (0%)
Pleasantville Market	746	62	26 (42%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2017)*

From 2000 to 2017, the Melcher-Dallas and Pella markets experience an increase in the number of children ages 0 to 9, while Bussey, Knoxville, and Pleasantville declined. The changes experienced in both the Pella (increased) and Knoxville (decrease) markets are significant. Across the county, the population of children ages 0 to 9 during this time increased a net 10 children.

**Table 4: Population Change in Ages 0 to 9**

	Bussey Market	Knoxville Market	Melcher- Dallas Market	Pella Market	Pleasantville Market	Total
2000	264	1,598	254	1,667	499	<b>4,282</b>
2010	192	1,596	260	1,909	547	<b>4,505</b>
2017	207	1,444	275	1,885	481	<b>4,292</b>
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>-57</b>	<b>-154</b>	<b>+21</b>	<b>+218</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>+10</b>

*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2000, 2010, 2017)*

**Table 5: Estimated Population by Age, 2017**

	Bussey Market	Knoxville Market	Melcher- Dallas Market	Pella Market	Pleasantville Market	Total
Under Two	26	253	70	336	101	<b>786</b>
Two-Year-Old	22	134	27	189	45	<b>417</b>
Three to Four-Year-Old	43	259	58	363	74	<b>797</b>
Five to Nine-Year-Old	116	798	120	997	261	<b>2,292</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>1,444</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>1,885</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>4,292</b>

*Note: Partial data from US Census Bureau (2018). Partial data from First Children's Finance (2018).*

## Working Families

In 2017, there were 13,098 total households in Marion County, 8,636 of those were family households. Forty-three percent (43%) of family households have their own children under the age of 18. Over the last five years, the median income for families with children under the age of 18 has been increasing, and today is \$71,988. An increase in incomes can reflect increased wage rates, more family members working, or those that were already employed working more hours. The labor force

participation rate for Marion County increased from 67% in 2011 to 68% in 2017, confirming there are slightly more adults working.

According to the US Census Bureau, 77% of families living in Marion County that have children ages 0 to 5 have all parents working, while 81% of families that have children ages 6 to 17 have all parents working. All parents working means if there are two parents living in the home both work, or if the child lives with a single parent that parent is working. These are similar to the state averages of 75% and 80% respectively. Despite the county-wide average being similar to the state average, individual markets do vary. Bussey has the lowest percentage of families with all parents working for both age groups, with 57% among those with children ages 0 to 5, and 71% among those with children ages 6 to 17. Knoxville has the highest percentage of all parents working among families with children ages 0 to 5 at 79%, while Pella is highest among families with children ages 6 to 17 at 83%. In most markets it is common to see lower percentages for all parents working for children ages 0 to 5, and a higher percentage when children are ages 6 to 17. The higher percentage among the older age group reflects more parents going to work after their children start elementary school. This pattern is reflected in all markets within Marion County except Knoxville which has a higher percentage of all parents working for ages 0 to 5, and Melcher-Dallas where there is no difference between the age groups.

**Table 6: Households and Families, 2017**

	<b>Bussey Market</b>	<b>Knoxville Market</b>	<b>Melcher- Dallas Market</b>	<b>Pella Market</b>	<b>Pleasantville Market</b>	<b>Marion County</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	749	4,916	773	5,210	1,450	13,098
Median Household Income	\$49,742	\$55,165	\$60,804	\$77,757	\$62,814	\$57,917
Labor Force Participation	65%	63%	62%	73%	68%	68%
<b>Family Households</b>	472	3,133	519	3,409	856	8,636
w/children under 18	193	1305	188	1,468	407	3,724
Average family size	2.92	2.93	2.76	3.10	3.29	2.97
Median Family Income	\$63,353	\$67,624	\$71,931	\$81,499	\$79,397	\$71,988
Households w/children ages 0 to 5, and all parents working	67%	79%	76%	77%	72%	77%
Households w/children ages 6 to 17, and all parents working	71%	77%	76%	83%	92%	81%

*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2017)*

### **Child Care and Quality of Life for Marion County Residents**

The child care sector serves two critical community functions. First, it is an economic driver allowing parents of children to work and earn income while at the same time creating jobs. Second, since children attending child care full-time typically spend between 35-50 hours per week with a caregiver who is not their parent, child care prepares children for school and life at a critical stage of their development.

In short, the child care industry is an essential component of Marion County's community infrastructure that keeps businesses growing and keeps parents working. In addition, quality child care

contributes to a higher quality of life for residents as it assures that children are experiencing the kind of care that not only is safe and nurturing, but prepares them for success and for growing into healthy and contributing future citizens.

Key to a positive future includes developing an infrastructure and community assets that will attract families that wish to make Marion County their home. Child care plays an essential role in a healthy community eco-system. The expansion of quality child care can be a catalyst for building a community that is vital, thriving and prosperous.

### Quality of Care

What is quality child care? Although there is no simple definition, the Iowa Department of Human Services is currently undergoing a process to better align with nationally recognized quality standards. Most recently, in SFY' 2018, the Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) Oversight Team completed a review of Iowa's QRS. As a result of this review the oversight team developed and has released drafts of newly redesigned quality categories for homes and centers. Categories of quality indicators include nutrition and physical activity, professional development, family and community partnerships, teaching staff or provider qualifications, teaching and learning, environment, and—for centers only—leadership and administration. ([www. http://dhs.iowa.gov/quality-rating-system](http://dhs.iowa.gov/quality-rating-system))

Furthermore, current research has shown that the early years (ages 0-5) are the most sensitive for brain development. Over 90% of brain growth occurs during this period. Once in school, students who receive quality early childhood education are more likely to graduate from high school, own a home and have a job, than their peers who did not attend preschool. Young children that spend time in safe and healthy environments that stimulate learning (i.e. quality early care and education programs) are more prepared when they start school and have long-term economic, academic and social benefits and reduced costs to individuals and communities later on.

According to secondary research conducted by the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, the annual rate of return on each \$1 dollar spent on high quality early care and education is 12% to 16%, with the greatest returns realized among children in low-income families.

Child care is not only a wise investment, the delivery of quality child care is a *business issue and a business challenge for child care providers*. A commitment to delivering quality care that results in quality learning outcomes for children requires significant resources for child care businesses. The lower classroom teacher-child ratios, purchase of age-appropriate curriculum, teacher training and improved teacher qualifications, physical environment improvements, and more – all result in increased costs. An investment in existing child care providers that are committed to quality is an investment in the future.

### Child Care as a Business Issue

As we look out into the future through the lens of national, state and local social and economic trends, the greatest hope for sustainable child care, particularly high-quality child care, rests in the community's ability to *develop strong childcare businesses* and to *diversify the dollars going into supporting them* through both *public and private sector engagement and investment*.



The business community in Marion County has a stake in child care. Businesses, communities and regional economies all benefit from quality child care. There are both short-term and longer-term benefits:

- Employee retention and decreased turnover;
- More productive employees, who know their children are receiving quality care;
- Employer ability to attract and keep the best employees and a younger workforce;
- Increased employment and career advancement opportunities at growing child care businesses;
- Spin-off jobs as a result of the multiplier effect of child care business development and retention;
- Less remedial expense as children are prepared to be successful in school;
- Sharp reductions in public expenditures on criminal justice, welfare and other remedial services; and
- A well prepared future workforce: the essential bedrock of regional economic growth.

An immediate cost due to the lack of availability of child care is employee turnover. “Studies by American Management Association and others report [employee turnover to be estimated at] a range between 25 percent and 250 percent of annual salary per exiting employee. Entry-level, unskilled positions are at the lower end of the cost range, while executive, managerial and sales positions are at the higher end.”<sup>2</sup> A 2006 article by Saratoga, a service offering of PricewaterhouseCoopers, lists the following turnover costs and consequences:

- Lost productivity during a vacancy
- Diminished productivity of the team and managers who are covering for a vacant position
- Diminished productivity of the team and managers who are training the new hire
- Increased labor costs due to overtime or contractors needs
- Hiring and onboarding costs
- More difficult to quantify impacts may include decreased customer satisfaction, increased future turnover and loss of institutional knowledge

Combined, these turnover-related costs represented more than 12% of pre-tax income for the average company.<sup>3</sup>

### **Business Investment in Child Care**

There are several ways for businesses and corporations to invest in child care in a way that meets employee and employer needs and promotes a positive image of their business in the community. Local employers can support their workers by investing in child care. Support of individual child care businesses can come in one or more forms. First Children’s Finance has determined through this analysis and strategic planning process the following examples are all viable options for Marion County:

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<sup>2</sup> Spremulli, Michael. (2011, June 22). Employee Turnover on the Rise. *The Total View*. Retrieved from <http://www.chrysaliscorporation.com/employee-turnover-on-the-rise/>

<sup>3</sup> *Driving the Bottom Line: Improving Retention*. Copyright © PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2006. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/Documents/saratoga-improving-retention.pdf>

- Sponsor spaces within a child care center(s) or home(s). These spaces are then reserved for that business's employees.
- Fund a child care scholarship that is available to employees that exceed the Child Care Assistance threshold, but still struggle to afford quality child care. This could be in the form of a reimbursement, and may have different levels of support for different incomes.
- Business or corporate giving grants/community investment funds.
- Donate space for on-site child care that is available to both employees and the community.
- Invest in building a child care facility that bears the corporate or business name.

All contributions, at various levels of support are needed, are recognized as significant, and promote a positive image of the business or corporation providing that gift and that support.

### **Early Care and Education Environments in Iowa**

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet each family's varying needs and preferences.

- Licensed Child Care Centers/Preschools
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- School-Based Programs
  - School-Age Care
  - Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for 4-year-olds
- Registered Child Development Homes
- Legal Unregulated Home Care
  - Nanny or Au Pare
  - Family, Friend or Neighbor care

The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available.

### **Iowa Department of Human Services<sup>4</sup>**

In Iowa, the Department of Human Services oversees programs that fall into three categories—Licensed Centers, Child Development Homes and Child Care Homes. The level of regulation placed on the provider varies based on the type.

#### *Licensed Centers*

Licensed Centers include child care centers (including child care programs operated by school districts), Head Start programs, and preschools. A center can care for larger groups of children, which are typically separated by age groups according to specific staff-to-child ratios. All centers are required to have an Iowa DHS inspection prior to opening and an annual inspection after that. A licensed center may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with DHS, and can participate in the voluntary Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Information in this section adapted from "Child Care Overview". Iowa Department of Human Services. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://dhs.iowa.gov/childcare/overview>

<sup>5</sup> Quality Rating System (QRS) is voluntary rating system for Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, Head Start programs, and child care programs that are operated by school districts. Participating providers achieve a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, by meeting key indicators of quality in the areas of



### *Child Development Homes (Registered Homes)*

Anyone caring for more than 5 children at a time is required to register with the Iowa Department of Human Services. Registered Child Development Homes can provide care for up to 8, 12 or 16 children at a time depending on the registration level. Registration levels A, B, or C are based on the providers experience and if there are any assistants or co-providers present. These programs are required to have an Iowa DHS inspection prior to opening and an unannounced annual inspection after that. A Child Development Home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with DHS, and can participate in the voluntary Child Net<sup>6</sup> and Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) programs.

### *Child Care Homes*

Child Care homes can care for 5 or fewer children at any given time. These programs are not required to register, but have the option to do so. A Child Care Home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with DHS. Child Care Homes serving children eligible for child care assistance must complete an unannounced annual inspection once per year to assure compliance with health, safety, and fire standards. These providers are not eligible to participate in Child Net or Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS).

The following table shows a comparison of the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) requirements for child care providers in Iowa.

**Table 7: DHS Requirements for Child Care Providers in Iowa**

	Non-Registered Home w/out DHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/DHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Licensed Center
State Regulated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum Capacity <sup>7</sup>	5	5	8	12	8	16	Varies by license
Inspection prior to Registration/Licensing			•	•	•	•	•
Annual Facility & Records Inspection		•	•	•	•	•	•
Minimum age of caregiver		18 years	18 years	20 years	21 years	21 years	Lead teacher 18 years

professional development, health and safety, environment, family and community partnership, and leadership and administration.

<sup>6</sup> ChildNet certification is a requirement for Child Care Home providers wishing to achieve a Level 2 and higher in the Iowa Quality Rating System. To earn ChildNet certification, the provider must complete the ChildNet training series with Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and demonstrate 100% compliance with the Iowa Department of Human Services' Registration checklist through a certification visit with their local CCR&R Child Care Consultant.

<sup>7</sup> A home providers' own children are included in their legal capacity. Their school-age children are not unless they are being home-schooled.

	Non-Registered Home w/out DHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/DHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Licensed Center
Iowa child abuse registry check <sup>8</sup>		•	•	•	•	•	•
Iowa criminal records check <sup>7</sup>		•	•	•	•	•	•
National (FBI) Fingerprint-based records check		•	•	•	•	•	•
Experience required				2 years or 1 year w/child related degree	5 years or 4 year w/child related degree	5 years or 4 year w/child related degree	Combination of experience and education
Minimum education required				High school or GED	High school or GED	High school or GED	Director/ On-Site Supervisor High school or GED
Minimum pre-service & orientation trainings		•	•	•	•	•	•
Non-smoking environment		•	•	•	•	•	•
Fire-extinguishers and smoke detectors		•	•	•	•	•	•
2 direct exits				•	•	•	•
Space requirements				•	•	•	•
Quiet area for sick children				•	•	•	•
Reference letters			3 letters of reference				

Adapted from: Iowa Department of Human Services. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/ChildCareRequirements.aspx>.

### Iowa Department of Education

Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) administered by the Iowa Department of Education provides an opportunity for all young children in the State of Iowa to enter school ready to learn by expanding voluntary access to quality preschool curricula for all four-year-old children. School districts that have been approved to participate receive funding to offer 10 hours of preschool per week during the school year for four-year-olds. Districts may provide the preschool directly or contract with a community partner to provide preschool on their behalf.

<sup>8</sup> Iowa child abuse registry and Iowa criminal records checks are required for all household members age 14 and older.

Until January 2016 some schools districts that offered child care, preschool, or before and after/school care were exempt from being licensed under DHS as a child care center because they were overseen by the Iowa Department of Education. Due to legislation changes, today many of those programs need to be licensed as a child care center under DHS. Statewide Voluntary Preschool is still exempt as long as it remains within the 10 hours per week and only serves four-year-olds.

### Legal Unregulated Care

In Iowa, parents may choose “family, friend, or neighbor care” or having an unrelated caregiver such as a nanny or au pair. This type of care is not regulated and is typically not tracked by DHS unless they have an agreement with the department to accept child care assistance. Because these providers may be “off the radar” and data is not available, this report does not include unregulated providers that do not have an agreement with DHS to accept child care assistance.

### Early Care and Education Supply

Over the last five years the number of child care programs and spaces listed with Child Care Resource & Referral in Marion County has changed. There has been a significant decrease in the number of spaces within homes, while there has been an increase in spaces located within child care centers and preschools. From 2013 to 2018, there was a loss of spaces in Registered Child Development Homes and Child Care Homes. While there was some increase in the number of spaces in Child Care Centers and Preschools. The net increase of 154 center-based spaces, was not enough to off-set the 254 home-based losses, as a result there was a net loss of 74 spaces in the county.

**Table 8: Number of Programs Listed with Child Care Resource & Referral**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Net Change
<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>-35</b>
DHS Centers & Preschools	11	10	8	7	8	9	-2
Dept. of Ed. Programs	6	6	7	7	7	7	+1
Registered Child Dvmt. Homes	32	30	29	27	25	20	-12
Child Care Homes	25	35	34	14	6	3	-22
<b>Total Spaces</b>	<b>1,512</b>	<b>1,536</b>	<b>1,618</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>-74</b>
DHS Centers & Preschools	849	835	920	715	929	1,003	+154
Dept. of Ed. Programs	158	158	184	184	184	184	+26
Registered Child Dvmt. Homes	380	368	344	328	300	236	-144
Child Care Homes	125	175	170	70	30	15	-110

*Adapted from Marion County Annual Data Sheets, 2013-2018. Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://iowaccrr.org/>.*

According to Iowa DHS, as of February 2019, there were 28 programs offering 1,223 spaces in Marion County. These providers offer a variety of services including child care, preschool, before and after school care, and programs for school age children. They breakdown as follows:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools- There were 8 DHS Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools that collectively offer 986 spaces. Four (4) of the centers are located in Pella, 2 in Knoxville, 1 in Bussey, and 1 in Pleasantville.

- Registered Child Development Homes- There were 19 DHS Registered Child Development Homes collectively registered for 236 spaces. Eleven (11) of the providers are in the Knoxville market, 5 in Pella, 1 in Melcher, 1 in Otley, and 1 in Pleasantville.
- Child Care Homes - There was 1 Child Care Homes that can care for up to 5 children at any given time. This provider was located in the Pleasantville market.

**Table 9: DHS Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools**

Program	Hours	Capacity	Child Care Assistance	Quality Initiatives <sup>9</sup>	Ages	Year-Round
After School Kids Club, Pella	7:30 am- 6:00 pm, M-F	200	Yes		5 to 12	Yes
Building Blocks Preschool, Pleasantville	8:30 am- 3:30 pm, T-Th	30	No	Iowa QRS 4	3 -5	No
De Kinderen Huis Learning & Discovery Center <sup>10</sup> , Pella	5:30 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	90	Yes		0 to 12	Yes
Little Sabers Childcare Center, Bussey	6:00 am- 6:00 pm, M-F	24	Yes	Iowa QRS 1	0 to 12	Yes
Montgomery Street Preschool, Knoxville	8:30 am- 11:00 am, M-F	54	No	Iowa QRS 4	2 to 5	No
Pella Early Learning Center, Pella	6:00 am- 6:00 pm, M-F	135	Yes		0 to 10	Yes
Stepping Stones Early Learning Center, Knoxville	5:45 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	325	Yes	Iowa QRS 4	0 to 12	Yes
Vermeer Yellow Iron Academy, Pella	5:30 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	136	No	NAEYC Accreditation	0 to 12	Yes

*Note: Data from Iowa Department of Human Services. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/clientportal/providersearch.aspx>.*

<sup>9</sup> Quality Rating System (QRS) is voluntary rating system for Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, Head Start programs, and child care programs that are operated by school districts. Participating providers achieve a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, by meeting key indicators of quality in the areas of professional development, health and safety, environment, family and community partnership, and leadership and administration.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation is a voluntary designation that requires programs to meet standards grouped into 10 areas: relationships with children, curriculum, teaching approaches, child assessment, nutrition and health, staff qualifications, relationship with children's families, relationship with the community, physical environment, and program leadership and management. As of February 2019, there are 114 NAEYC Accredited programs in Iowa.

<sup>10</sup> At the time this report is being written, De Kinderen Huis Learning & Discovery Center is preparing to begin remodeling to add 5 classrooms, and Little Sabers Childcare Center is negotiating with Twin Cedars School District for the use of 1 additional classroom. Until Iowa DHS licenses these new classrooms, the exact capacity cannot be verified, therefore any newly created spots are not reflected in the totals within this report, however they should not be overlooked when discussing future solutions.

**Table 10: Home-Based Providers Listed by Iowa DHS**

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Registration Type</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Child Care Assistance</b>	<b>QRS Level</b>
Amy Devin, Knoxville	7:30 am- 4:30 pm, M-F	A	8	Yes	
Ashley Belloma, Pella Little Learners Daycare	7:30 am- 5:00 pm, 7 days	C2	16	No	
Brenda Schneider, Knoxville	6:00 am- 10:00 pm, 7 days	C2	16	Yes	
Candi Washington, Knoxville	5:45 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	C2	16	Yes	
Colleen Hampton, Knoxville	5:30 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	B	12	Yes	2
Elizabeth De Joode, Knoxville	7:00 am- 5:00 pm, M-F	C1	8	Yes	
Gina Lee Hammann, Knoxville	4:30 am- 5:30 pm M-F	B	12	Yes	
Laurie Mc Garry, Knoxville	5:00 am- 5:00 pm, M-F	B	12	Yes	
Lisa Crozier, Melcher	4:00 am- 6:00 pm, 7 days	B	12	Yes	
Lisa Dingel, Knoxville	24 hours, 7 days	C1	8	No	
Margaret Clinkenbeard, Pleasantville	24 hours, 7 days	No	5	No	
Michelle Machovsky, Knoxville	5:45 am- 5:30 pm, M-F	C2	16	Yes	
Nikki Kimzey, Otley	6:00 am- 5:30 pm, 7 days	B	12	Yes	
Pameal Abrams, Pella Bundles of Joy Quality Care	24 hours, 7 days	B	12	Yes	
Rebecca Ausman, Pella A Leap Ahead In Home Care	7:30 am- 4:30 pm, M-F	B	12	Yes	4
Sherry Weldon, Knoxville	6:30 am- 4:30 pm, M-F	C2	16	Yes	
Sondra Seuferer, Pleasantville Little Angels Daycare	6:00 am- 5:00 pm, M-F	C2	16	No	
Stephanie Buse, Pella	4:30 am- 5:15 pm, M-F	B	12	Yes	
Susan Kennedy, Knoxville	5:00 am- 11:59 pm. M-F	A	8	Yes	
Tamara Langstraat, Pella	5:00 am- 5:00 pm. M-W, F 5:00 am- 8:30 pm, Th	B	12	Yes	

*Note: Data from Iowa Department of Human Services. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/clientportal/providersearch.aspx>.*

In addition to the providers listed in the previous tables, DHS noted there were 3 additional programs that are exempt from DHS. All 3 of these programs are preschools associated with public or private school districts.

**Table 11: Child Care Centers and Preschools Exempt from DHS Licensing**

	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Child Care Assistance</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Year-Round</b>	<b>QRS</b>
Creation Station Christian Preschool (Pella Christian), Pella	8:30-11:15 am, M, W, F- 4s 12:30-3:00 pm M, W or 8:30-11:00 am T, Th- 3s	No	3 & 4	No	4
One to Grow On (Pella Christian), Pella	8:30-11:30 am, M, W, F	No	4 & 5	No	4
Pleasantville Community Schools & Preschool	8:10 am- 3:25 pm, T-F	No	4	No	4

*Note: Data from Iowa Department of Human Services. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/clientportal/providersearch.aspx>.*

Residents of Marion County are served by 7 public school districts. Five (5) are centered within the county, while 2 are centered in a neighboring county and only serve a small portion of Marion County. The following districts serve Marion County:

- Knoxville School District- The district is based out of Knoxville in Central Marion County. The district is contained within Marion County, and serves the communities of Knoxville and Harvey.
- Melcher-Dallas School District--Serves the community of Melcher-Dallas. The district boundaries are within Marion County.
- Pella School District--Based out of Pella, this district serves those that live in the Northeast portion of Marion County, Northwest Mahaska County, and a small portion of Southeastern Jasper County.
- Pleasantville School District- Serves the communities of Pleasantville and Swan. Located on the western side of the county, the district also stretches into Eastern Warren County.
- Prairie City Monroe School District- PCM serves communities in Jasper County, including Prairie City, Monroe, and Reasnor. The district stretches into the unincorporated areas of Northwest corner of Marion County. There are no facilities in Marion County.
- Southeast Polk School District- Southeast Polk serves communities in Polk County, including Altoona, Mitchellville, Pleasant Hill, and Runnels. The district stretches into a very small portion of the Northwestern corner of Marion County. The district has no facilities in Marion County.
- Twin Cedar School District--The district is based out of Bussey in Southeast Marion County. The district serves the communities of Bussey, Hamilton, and Marysville as well as unincorporated areas in Mahaska County to the east.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) is available at all 5 districts that are based out of Marion County. According to certified enrollment numbers reported to the Iowa Department of Education for the 2017-18 school year, there were 202 students enrolled in these preschool programs.

**Table 12: Certified Enrollments for Statewide Voluntary Preschool**

	<b>2017-18 Enrollment</b>
Knoxville Community School District	48
Melcher-Dallas Community School District	36
Pella Community School District	50
Pleasantville Community School District	42
Twin Cedars Community School District	26

*Note: Data from Iowa Department of Education. Retrieved September 2018 from*

*<https://www.educateiowa.gov/data-reporting/data-reporting/certified-enrollment/school-district-certified-enrollment>.*

### **Price Point**

According to Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, as of July 2018, the average weekly rates for full-time care in a DHS Licensed Child Care Center in Marion County ranged from \$193.15 for an infant to \$136.05 for school age children when there was no school. Part-time care for before and after school averaged \$69.10 per week. The average weekly rates for infant through preschool-age (until child goes to Kindergarten), and Before/After school care increased from 2017 to 2018. The largest increase was among toddler care at \$11.91 per week. The average tuition for full-time care of school age children decreased by \$5.70 per week.

The average weekly rates for full time care in a DHS Registered Child Development Home as of July 2018 ranged from \$129.15 per week for an infant to \$118.65 for school age children when there was no school. Before/After school care averaged \$75.00 per week. The average weekly rates all ages increased from 2017 to 2018, with the largest increase in the Before/After school rates, increasing \$15.96 per week.

In addition to providers making changes to their rates, changes in average tuition rates can be the result of providers going out of business, new providers coming into the market, or homes that let their registration expire and are no longer included in the average (centers cannot let their license expire, if it does they will be shut down).

**Table 13: Average Weekly Tuition Rates of Licensed Centers in Marion County**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Infant	\$169.75	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$190.50	\$187.12	\$193.10
Toddler	\$169.75	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$190.50	\$181.19	\$193.10
Two Year Old	\$145.12	\$149.95	\$159.95	\$168.08	\$165.69	\$172.65
Three Year Old	\$140.12	\$144.95	\$154.95	\$158.92	\$159.19	\$163.45
Four & Five Year Old	\$133.25	\$140.45	\$150.45	\$155.92	\$155.44	\$160.45
School-Age (full time)	\$136.25	\$115.00	\$130.62	\$145.58	\$141.75	\$136.05
Before & After School	\$58.75	\$58.75	\$56.25	\$61.75	\$67.62	\$69.10

*Adapted from Marion County Annual Data Sheets, 2013-2018. Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://iowaccrr.org/>.*

**Table 14: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Child Development Homes in Marion County**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Infant	\$123.52	\$123.33	\$126.67	\$123.82	\$124.72	\$129.15
Toddler	\$116.38	\$117.67	\$117.50	\$119.71	\$122.22	\$126.32
Two Year Old	\$114.99	\$116.00	\$117.50	\$119.71	\$119.44	\$124.95
Three Year Old	\$113.71	\$115.00	\$117.50	\$119.41	\$119.17	\$123.65
Four & Five Year Old	\$113.71	\$115.00	\$117.50	\$119.41	\$119.17	\$121.95
School-Age (full time)	\$100.78	\$106.92	\$113.00	\$116.79	\$110.71	\$118.65
Before & After School	\$63.01	\$60.83	\$61.50	\$55.75	\$59.04	\$75.00

*Adapted from Marion County Annual Data Sheets, 2013-2018. Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. Retrieved February 2019 from <https://iowaccrr.org/>.*



## Child Care Needs Survey

Three different surveys were conducted to determine how child care affects Marion County. The surveys were developed by First Children's Finance, with input from the Marion County Child Care Steering Committee. To assure there were no bias and to maintain confidentiality, surveys were distributed electronically and then collected and analyzed by First Children's Finance.

A total of 51 employers and 20 child care providers participated in their respective surveys, while 796 individuals participated in the parent surveys. Responses from the parent surveys were separated and only data from those that currently have children age 12 or younger, along with those that plan to have/adopt children in the next 5 years was analyzed.

### Employer Survey

A total of 51 employer surveys, representing 50 different companies were received. Employers that responded are located in the towns of Bussey, Knoxville, Pella, and Pleasantville. The companies participated represent the following industries:

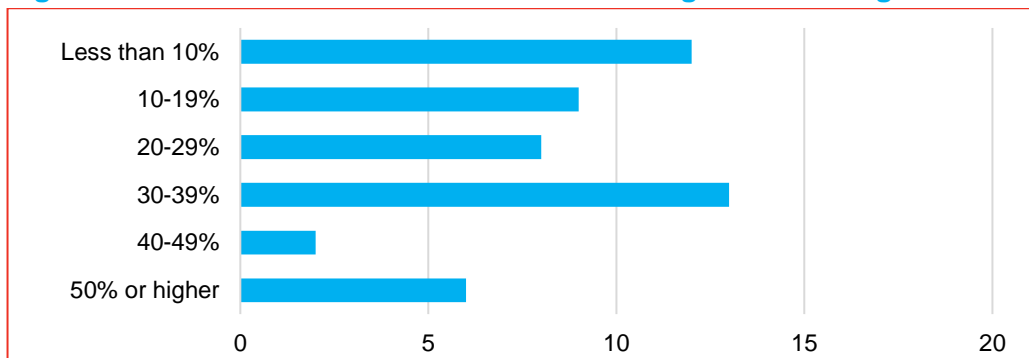
**Table 15: Industry of Employers**

	Total Employers
Manufacturing	8
Education	6
Health Care	5
Finance & Insurance	4
Retail	4
Food Service	2
Professional & Technical Services	2
Government	5
All Other	14

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Of the 50 different employers represented, 26 indicate the majority of the labor force is male, while 22 indicate theirs is mostly female, and 2 say it is a 50/50 split. Of the 26 companies that indicated they have a primarily male labor force, 2 say their labor force is 100% male. Of the 22 that indicated their labor force is primarily female, 3 say theirs is 100% female, and 3 others say theirs is 99% female.

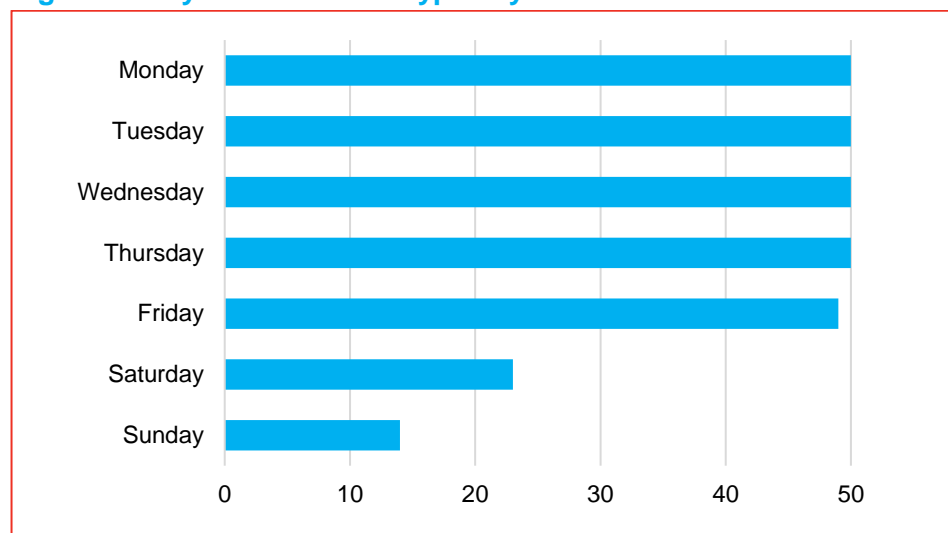
**Figure 2: Estimated Labor Force with Children Age 12 or Younger**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

When asked which days of the week their labor force typically works, all 50 employers indicated they operate Monday through Thursday, 49 operate on Friday, 24 operate on Saturday, and 15 on Sunday. Ten (10) operate 24-hours a day, with the majority of those located in Pella (7), and the remainder located in Knoxville (3). Of those that operated 24-hours a day, 5 are manufacturers, 2 are health care, 2 lodging, and 1 retail. Another 29 have varying hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. A total of 6 open before 7:00 a.m. and a total of 6 stay open after 7:00 p.m.

**Figure 3: Days Labor Force Typically Works**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Most employers (64%) indicated that there are some times their schedules fluctuate in hours or days. Those that said they have changes or fluctuations gave reasons such as overtime, weekends and evenings during summer, staff not working over summer, occasional weekends, and plant shut-downs at slower times.

Summary of comments about schedule fluctuations:

- *Plan shutdown between Christmas and New Year's Day.*
- *Seasonal changes-Mid-April through Mid-October. Staff work weekends and nights...*
- *Most employees are off for the summer months.*
- *[We] operate 24/7 and with the exception of major holidays. We have various schedules in our location, some of which are harder to find child care for (off-shifts, weekends).*
- *During peak times of the year we stay busier and some departments have more hours.*
- *Longer days in the summer, sometimes occasional Saturdays.*
- *Manufacturing which experiences overtime, shut-downs, and other scheduling fluctuations to meet business needs.*
- *Between Christmas and New Year's we have a slow-down. Business demands dictate the number of team members needed to work that week. The majority of the operations work force is off work this week.*
- *Saturday and Sunday work is not always required.*

Out of the 50 employers represented, 26% indicated they had challenges related to productivity or employee absenteeism due to child care options or challenges, while another 27% were unsure. In

a separate question, 12% indicated they had experienced difficulty hiring employees due to child care options or challenges, while another 34% were unsure.

Summary of comments about employer challenges:

- *Due to the schedules, employees often have a hard time finding childcare. We also have areas in the plant where employees could be required to work unplanned overtime, which in addition to normal childcare, employees very much struggle to find care for sick children. Often, employees with younger children are less senior employees, with less vacation.*
- *There are not enough childcare centers and providers for the workforce in Pella. There also needs to be more before and after school care. We have employees who are grandparents who have to take time off to babysit their grandchildren when out of school.*
- *Have a large number of employees that cannot come to work until children have been dropped off and leave early to pick up due to limitations.*
- *Employee needs to leave because of school cancellations or sickness. This leave us short notice to cover the shift for the employee. Many times this will close [the business] because of staffing issues.*
- *There are issues with needed drop in care when the regular daycare provider is ill, on vacation or otherwise unavailable to the family. Many employees do not have daycare providers that transport children to school or preschool.*
- *Typically new hires go on an afternoon or midnight shift, where there are less childcare options available.*
- *Many of our employees begin employment on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> shift. Feedback has been received that there are not available sitters for those shifts.*
- *We have had team members and applicants not be able to meet the required work hours due to a lack of childcare during the evenings and weekends.*

Employers were asked if their company currently offered any child care related benefits or supported child care programs (they were allowed to select more than one answer). The most common child care related benefit offered is a cafeteria plan or flex spending for dependent care, followed by flexible schedules or work-from-home options when a family’s regular child care arrangement is not available. Nearly 25%, 12 of the 50 employers, do not offer any sort of employee benefits or flexibility related to child care.

**Table 16: Child Care Related Benefits Currently Offered**

	Number of Employers
Cafeteria Plan or Flex Spending for dependent care	28
Flexible schedule/work-from-home if regular care is temporarily not available	19
Donation to a child care program for general operating	7
Child care information included in orientation or employee handbook	3
Employee financial assistance or subsidy to pay for child care	2
Donation to a child care program for scholarship for all children	2
Donation to a child care program for scholarships for your employees	1
None of the above	12

Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Reasons why their company does not offer some of these benefits, were: decisions not being made locally, costs, and not feeling there is a need among employees. Employers were asked to share any other ways their company assists employees with child care or directly assists child care programs.

Summary of comments about child care-related benefits or direct assistance to child care programs:

- *Donating to child care programs hasn't really crossed our minds, probably because there has never been much of a need.*
- *I'm not sure, that would be an administrative or board decision to start some of those options.*
- *We work with employees to find childcare and honestly haven't considered financial assistance to employees for childcare.*
- *Not within the scope of operating money to offer additional benefits listed above.*
- *Unfair as we only have a couple that have daycare age children.*
- *Cost... revenue is down.*
- *Availability of childcare centers and financial costs to make the program equitable and fair to all.*
- *We pay 100% health insurance for employees and their families so it is difficult to help out in terms of childcare as this is a huge expense.*
- *Don't know or not aware of some options (donations). Cafeteria/FSA might be offered for the 2019 plan year. Not aware of any materials related to child care information to hand out.*
- *Child care has not been an issue for our employees for many years. It may be an issue in the future as current employees retire and new employees with young children are hired. We may look at opening up opportunities at that time.*
- *Nothing has prevented it. There are just not a lot of childcare options for the off hours.*

Employers were asked to provide thoughts about their employees' needs related to child care, the supply of child care in Marion County, and how child care affects their company and/or employees.

Summary of comments about employee's needs for child care:

- *Having dependable child care could help alleviate any concerns employees may have regarding child care. When employees have to miss work due to a sick child, they lose out on wages for the day.*
- *We do often have several new staff ask about daycare options in our area as we are so far away from a bigger town. Not many options around.*
- *We have many new families who visit and ask about childcare. If there is a printed resource available for Marion County, [we] would be happy to distribute it.*
- *I would love to be able to offer onsite childcare options but we simply do not have the space.*
- *Lack of child care centers in Knoxville. No centers with off shift/weekend coverage.*
- *We do well with our regular business hours staff. Our staff that works evenings/nights mostly do not have children or have a spouse at home who cares for kids outside of normal business hours.*
- *Since we are in the service industry, most of our employees are part time. Part time employees set their own schedules, so this isn't much of an issue for us.*
- *Quality childcare is a parent's main concern. They can not be productive at work if they are worried about the care their children are receiving.*
- *Greatly limits our work force due to limitations.*

- *There seems to be a lack of child care available for part-time or seasonal employees. For instance, an employee who needs child care for 2-3 days a week with a variable schedule and/or employees who work only during the summer or the school year. An easily accessible directory of available child care providers would be helpful.*
- *The Pleasantville area seems to have several certified daycare providers, giving our employees options.*
- *I don't think there are enough options for the night shift child care as well as sick care for kids.*

## Child Care Provider Survey

A total of 20 child care providers participated in the survey. The majority of providers were located in Pella and Knoxville, however Bussey, Otley, Pershing, and Pleasantville were also represented.

Fourteen (14) respondents were home-based providers, while 6 represented a child care center. Of the 14 home providers, 5 were DHS registered providers and 7 were not. Among the providers that were not registered, 1 was previously registered but is not longer. One (1) is interested in becoming registered with DHS, while none of the 7 had an agreement to accept Child Care Assistance.

**Table 17: Location of Child Care Program**

	<b>Total Providers</b>
Bussey	1
Knoxville	7
Otley	1
Pella	9
Pershing	1
Pleasantville	1

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Nine of the home providers and all 6 centers answered questions about the length of time they have been providing care, and how much longer they plan to provide care (home providers only). Many of the respondents have been providing care for a number of years. Two (2) centers opened in the early 1970's, and the remaining 4 opened after 2000, with the newest in 2017. Of the 9 home providers that answered these questions, 8 indicated they have been providing care for 16 or more years and 1 indicated it has been 3 years. The 5 home providers that have been providing care the longest are all unregistered, and have provided care 31 years, 30 years, 24 years, 24 years, and 19 years. The home providers were also asked how much longer they intend to provide child care. Seven (7) are planning on 4 or more years, while 1 is planning 3 or more years, and 1 is planning on 1 more year.

Providers reported they are currently collectively caring for 587 children, with some enrolled full-time and others part-time. The 6 centers reported that according to Iowa DHS licensing capacities, their collective legal capacity is 682 children. Although the licensed capacity is assigned to a center based on usable square footage, there are often reasons for the provider setting a lower preferred capacity. Reasons for a lower preferred capacity may include the ability to staff all classrooms, or large spaces like multi-purpose rooms counted in the total license that do not work well for a classroom. Only 1 center indicated their preferred capacity is the same as their DHS determined capacity, the other 5

indicated their preferred capacity was lower. Most of those that prefer a lower capacity had a difference of less than 5 spaces, but 2 had a difference of 71 and 135 respectively.

One (1) DHS registered category A home and 1 DHS registered category C1 home reported their maximum DHS capacity as lower than the maximum allowed according to DHS information. This difference may be that the provider has been approved for a lower number due to limitations within their setting, such as the square footage of their home.

More than one non-registered home indicated their maximum capacity according to Iowa DHS and their own preferred capacity as higher than the maximum legal capacity according to DHS. The total enrollments for the Unregistered Providers are higher than the maximum legal capacity for the number who responded. More than one unregistered home provider did not answer these questions. More information is needed to determine the reasons for these issues.

**Table 18: Child Care Providers by Type**

	<b>Total Providers</b>	<b>Legal Capacity</b>	<b>Reported Max. Cap<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Preferred Capacity<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Full-Time Enrollment<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Part-Time Enrollment<sup>11</sup></b>
Licensed Center/Preschool	6	685		502	392	107
Category C2 Home	1	16	---	---	---	---
Category C1 Home	1	8	10	10	10	2
Category B Home	4	48	34	23	10	12
Category A Home	1	8	6	9	4	0
Non-registered Home	7	35	27	39	32	18

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Providers were asked about both the availability and the quality of child care options in Marion County. For each question they were asked if it was very good, good, poor, or very poor. Five (5) of the 6 centers and 9 of the 14 home providers answered. When it comes to the availability of care, both groups were almost evenly split between Good and Poor. No one in either group answered very good, or very poor.

The only comment provided was in regards to the availability of options was:

- Many options for full day child care but the high quality ones are always full.

<sup>11</sup> Preferred Capacity and Total Enrollment totals reflect only those providers that provide information. All 6 centers answered, the only C2 provider skipped these questions, 2 of 4 category B providers answered, and 5 of 7 unregistered providers answered.

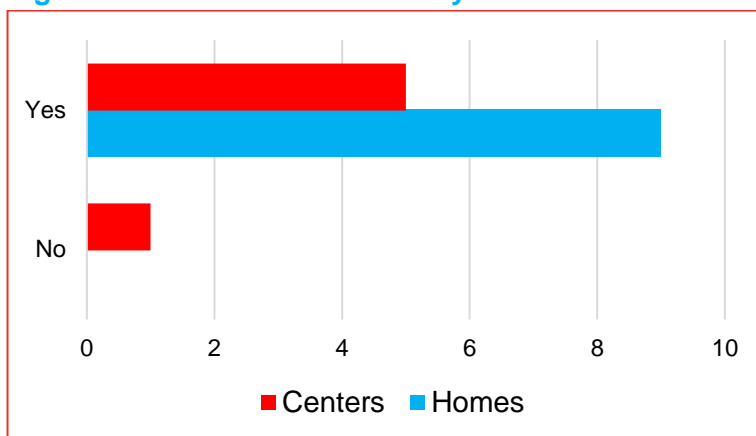
**Figure 4: Availability of Child Care in Marion County**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Many of the providers responding to the survey indicated in the last 12 months, they have turned away families or put them on a waitlist because of a lack of openings in their program. Five (5) of the 6 centers indicate they have, while all 9 homes that answered this question indicate they have. While none of the providers offered additional comments with this question, later in the survey when asked about challenges for child care in the future in Marion County, a few made comments related to there not being enough providers.

**Figure 5: Providers Turned Away Families**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Providers were given a list of 19 factors that parents may consider when looking for child care, and asked to indicate when parents contact the provider about care, which factor is most important to parents. This question was answered by 5 of the centers and 9 of the homes. Answers among the centers were spread among available space/timing of enrollment, educational curriculum used, part-time options, and tuition rates or price. The number one choice among home providers was available space/timing of enrollment, followed by dependable provider/staff, and transportation to/from school or preschool. According to the parent survey done as a part of this same study, the number one factor for parents was when the provider will have an opening or when the child can be enrolled.

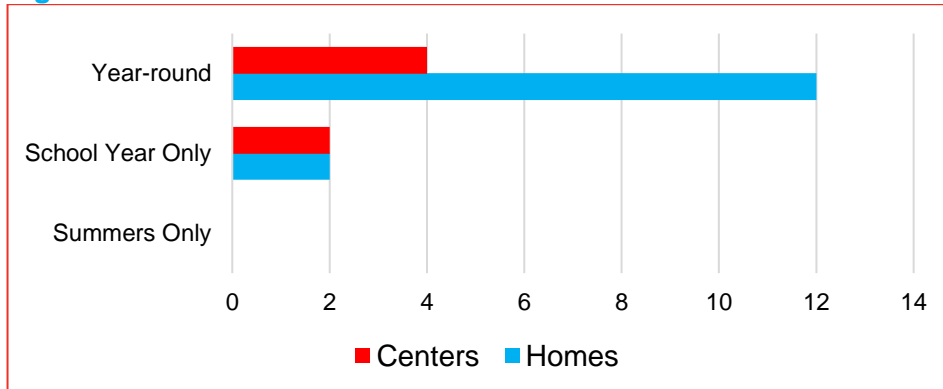
**Table 19: Single Most Important Factor When Parents Contact You for Care**

	Centers	Homes
Available space/timing of enrollment	1	6
Educational curriculum used	2	0
Dependable provider/staff	0	2
Part-time options	1	0
Tuition rates or price	1	0
Transportation to/from school or preschool	0	1

Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Collectively, the centers have 144 employees, 56 part-time and 88 full-time. Turnover during the previous 12 months affected all 6 centers, ranging from one center with 1 employee leaving (voluntarily or involuntarily) to another center with 50 employees leaving. This adds up to 72 center employees turning over in one year, or a 50% annual turnover rate.

Sixteen (16) of the providers provide care year-round, while 4 only provide care during the school-year. Two (2) of the 4 that only operate during the school-year are non-registered homes, while the other 2 are licensed centers. The licensed centers are both preschool programs that operate only during the school year. Combined, these two programs account for 88 spaces per their DHS capacity.

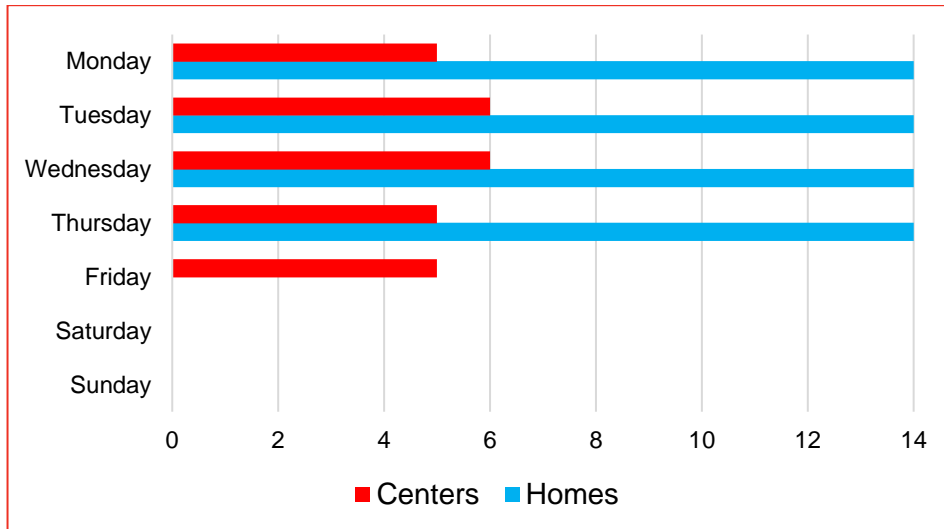
**Figure 6: When Care is Provided**

Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

All 20 providers indicate they provide child care on Tuesday and Wednesday, while 19 provide care on Monday, Thursday, and Friday. None of the survey participants indicated they provide care on Saturday or Sunday. Sixteen (16) provide care year-round, while the remaining 4 provide care only during the school year; 2 are preschools and 2 are home providers. The 6 centers open between 5:00 a.m. and 8:59 a.m. All of the home providers close between 4:00 p.m. and 5:59 p.m., while the centers are more spread out closing between 3:00 p.m. and 6:59 p.m. The home providers open and close earlier than the centers. The first two homes start providing care between 4:00 and 4:59 a.m., and by 7:59 a.m. all 14 are open.

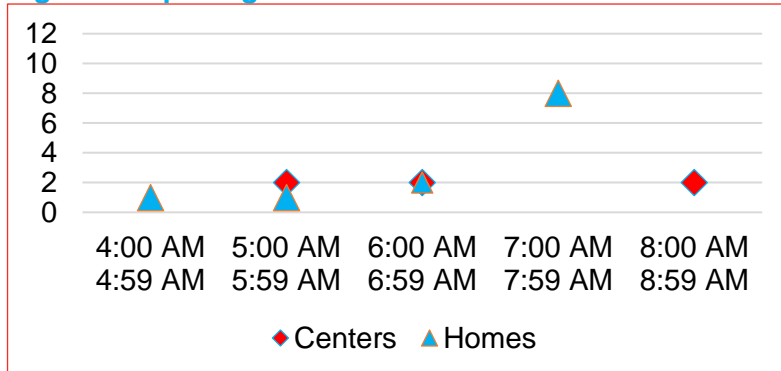


**Figure 7: Days Care is Provided**



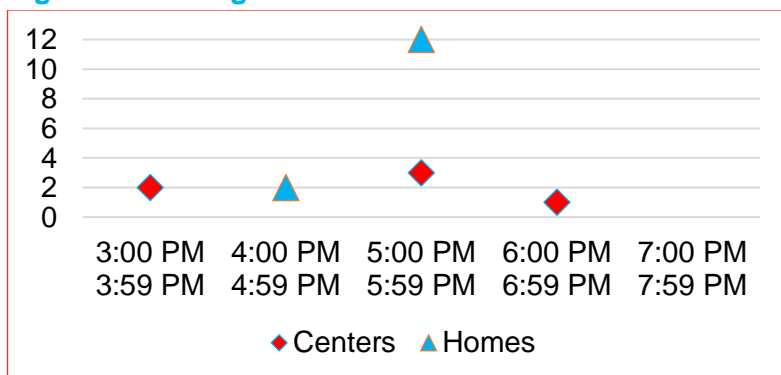
Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Figure 8: Opening Time**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Figure 9: Closing Time**

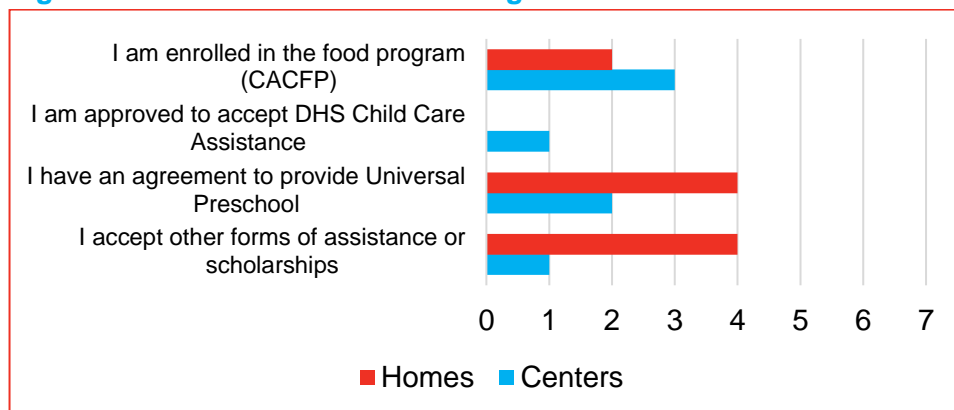


Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Many providers provide financial assistance or participate in programs that provide the center funding to off-set costs. Providers were asked which programs they participate in and if they offer any other forms of assistance such as scholarships. Eleven (11) providers (4 centers and 7 homes) indicated they participate in some sort of financial assistant program or offer financial assistance to parents.

Other forms of assistance named were: Promise Jobs, Jasper Marion Poweshiek Early Childhood Iowa scholarship program, and our own church scholarship program.

**Figure 10: Financial Assistance Programs for Parents**



Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

When it comes to the provider is perceptions of the quality of child care available in Marion County, center responses were evenly split between good and poor. No centers answered very good, or very poor. Home providers on the other hand, overwhelmingly indicated the quality of care in Marion County is very good or good. No home providers responded with poor or very poor.

**Figure 11: Quality of Child Care in Marion County**



Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

At the conclusion of the survey, providers were asked 5 open-ended questions about being a child care provider in Marion County, what they saw for the future of child care in Marion County, and any other comments they have about child care in the county. Summaries of these answers are listed below.

What are the biggest challenges for become a child care provider?

- *Classes required for part time and subs for our half day preschool. We can’t afford to pay employees enough to make it worth it for them to have to take so many classes for such little hours per week.*
- *Funding to help make programs high quality.*
- *Keeping up with self-employment taxes, and keeping up with DHS paperwork.*
- *Being flexible.*

- *Payments, trainings*
- *Getting the training requirement hours in.*
- *Finding continuing Ed classes in our county to continue registration.*
- *Doing the classes. It's better now with online classes, but I have never been able to get the DHS daycare portal to work for me without major problems.*
- *Providing all that DHS requires. But it is all important.*
- *For a larger center, proving yourself in the community can be challenging. It is also challenging for Preschool/PreK when [the schools] offer a part-day program.*
- *Getting started is difficult unless you do state pay.*
- *Available funds for the requirements, such as curriculum, tooth brushing program, staff.*
- *A lot of responsibilities and training and poor pay.*

How do you think the community could better support child care providers?

- *More funding for quality care.*
- *Higher wages for child care workers.*
- *Childcare provider trainings. Grants for providers.*
- *By letting people know we need more care.*
- *Better payment, more availability for trainings in the Knoxville area.*
- *Provide safe transportation to preschools.*
- *I believe some of the larger employers in Pella should work together to create a child care center for their employees.*
- *Our community is pretty supportive but in other communities their willingness to allow fundraisers or volunteer as guest speakers and such could help.*

What challenges do you see in the future for child care in Marion County?

- *Not enough will be able to stay open.*
- *Wages for workers in the area don't allow for higher wages for childcare providers in the area.*
- *Even if we can get more providers, they tend to burn out quickly, and we'll be back to square one.*
- *Not enough providers.*
- *Not enough quality providers.*
- *So many people want only part time care. They are trying to save money by having family and friends help them out.*
- *More and more are closing.*
- *Finding the special person it takes to open and run a center with all of its stresses and costs, that is willing to put in the work for the little pay.*
- *Hiring qualified staff.*

What opportunities do you see in the future for child care in Marion County?

- *High quality in-home programs are needed.*
- *It would be great to have many in-home providers with low numbers. Somehow with enough income to support themselves.*
- *I think if there was more help for people interested in opening centers child care would boom.*

Additional comments you have about child care in Marion County

- *I think doing child care in Marion County is a great thing to do and a great place to do it.*
- *I am a director and on site supervisor and have had to work 60 hour weeks for almost a year now in order to get my center up and going with funds out of my pocket. Between the paperwork, requirements, expectations, cost of staff and keeping cost of care fair it has been a journey. Having a coach to get started and really be supportive would have made things a lot easier. There are a large amount of things required that aren't stated clearly in the standards and procedures that were unexpected. I think having a program where each director in the county was able to help the other and share ideas, do's and don'ts, and have each other's back could help the future of child care in Marion County.*

## **Parent Survey**

A total of 796 individuals participated in the parent survey, of those 640 indicated they currently have children under the age of 12, and 50 indicated that they do not currently but do plan to have/adopt children in the next 5 years. All responses that were received within each group are included, even if an individual did not complete the full survey.

### **Parents that Currently Have Children Age 12 or Younger**

Using the most typical responses, a typical survey respondent with children age 12 or younger would be described as female (81%), married (88%), and living in Pella or the immediate surrounding rural area (61%). They work full time (77%) and are employed in manufacturing (32%). They currently use child care in Pella (67%), Monday through Friday (91% to 94%), and are using that care year-round (81%). They drop their child off for care between 7:00 a.m. and 7:59 a.m. (56%), and pick them up between 4:00 p.m. and 4:59 p.m. (37%). On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available and 5 being highly available, they rate the availability of child care in Marion County 2.58. When asked to rate the quality of care in Marion County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very low and 5 being very high, they rate it 3.23.

Current parents from outside Marion County that participated are from Mahaska County (44), Jasper (10), Polk (5), Monroe (3), Poweshiek (3), Wapello (2), Black Hawk (1), Keokuk (1), Lucas (1), Wayne (1), and 1 that did not disclose. When asked if the availability of child care has impacted their decision to live outside of Marion County, 5 indicated "yes". Sixty-eight (68) of the 72, work for an employer based in Marion County. Currently 18 are using child care within Marion County, and 27 indicated that when selecting child care in the future, their preferred location is within Marion County.

Future parents from outside Marion County are from Oskaloosa (2), Sully (2), Baxter (1), Des Moines (1), Jasper County (1), Monroe (1), Newton (1), and Shenandoah (1). When asked if the availability of child care has impacted their decision to live outside of Marion County, all 10 indicated "no". All 10 are currently working for an employer based in Marion County, and 7 indicated that when selecting child care in the future, their preferred location is within Marion County

Summary of comments about child care impacting parents' decision on living elsewhere:

- *We would love to move back to Pella where I grew up. However, since we have been unable to find quality and affordable daycare we haven't made the move.*

- *Childcare wasn't available at many centers when we were moving to the area. We had a 3 year old and a 1 year old when moving and many places (homes or centers) didn't have 2 openings.*

**Table 20: Respondents Place of Residence**

	Current Parents	Future Parents
Bussey	5	0
Hamilton	3	0
Harvey	8	1
Knoxville	115	8
Marysville	0	0
Melcher-Dallas	8	0
Pella	391	31
Pleasantville	34	0
Swan	4	0
Outside of Marion County	72	10

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Responses from individuals indicating they live outside the county were not included from this point forward, unless otherwise noted.

The majority of both current and future parents are married or living with a partner.

**Table 21: Marital Status of Current Parents**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Married	7	99	6	347	28
Living with a partner	1	9	1	12	2
Divorced	0	3	0	16	2
Widowed	0	2	0	0	0
Separated	0	3	0	3	1
Never been married	0	6	1	8	3

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Table 22: Marital Status of Future Parents**

	Knoxville	Pella
Married	6	28
Living with a partner	1	1
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	0	0
Separated	0	0
Never been married	2	2

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Current parents were asked to indicate how many children were living in their household among the following age groups: infants (0 to 11 months), toddlers (12 to 36 months), preschool age (3 to 5 year

olds), and school age children (ages 5 to 12 years). The “Responses” column of the table below shows how many parents indicated they have at least one child in each age category, while the “Children” column reflects how many total children are represented in the survey. The closer together these two numbers are, the more households there are with only one child within that age category. For example, 14 responses and 18 infants in the Knoxville area shows that are some households have more than one child under the age of one. Because parents may have children in more than one age groups, the responses column may be duplicative, however the children column is not. A total of 1,170 children are represented in all markets.

**Table 23: Total Children Represented by Age Group**

	Bussey Area		Knoxville Area		Melcher-Dallas	
	Responses	Children	Responses	Children	Responses	Children
0 to 11 months	1	1	14	18	0	0
12 to 35 months	4	4	41	45	4	4
3 to 5 Yr Old <sup>12</sup>	1	1	50	62	4	4
5 to 12 Yr Old <sup>13</sup>	6	13	75	114	3	5

	Pella Area		Pleasantville Area		Total
	Responses	Children	Responses	Children	Children
0 to 11 months	73	76	9	9	<b>104</b>
12 to 35 months	129	138	13	13	<b>204</b>
3 to 5 Yr Old	135	148	20	22	<b>237</b>
5 to 12 Yr Old	280	451	24	42	<b>625</b>

Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Of all current parents completing the survey, 78% work full-time, while 10% work part-time, 10% don’t work, and 2% work as-needed/on call. Respondents that indicated they are married or living with a partner were also asked about the work employment status of their spouse/partner. Results were similar, with most working full time (91%), followed by part-time (5%), don’t work (4%), and as-needed/on call (>1%). The following table shows the breakdown by employment status of the respondents and their spouses/partners.

**Table 24: Employment Status of Current Parents**

	Bussey Area		Knoxville Area		Melcher-Dallas	
	Self	Spouse	Self	Spouse	Self	Spouse
Full-Time	6	13	102	200	7	7
Part-Time	3	4	9	13	0	0
As-needed/on call	0	0	1	1	1	0
Don’t work	1	1	9	15	0	0

	Pella Area		Pleasantville Area	
	Self	Spouse	Self	Spouse
Full-Time	292	326	30	28
Part-Time	44	21	2	1
As-needed/on call	7	1	1	0
Don’t work	43	11	3	1

Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Includes children age 5 that have not started Kindergarten.

<sup>13</sup> Includes children age 5 that have started Kindergarten.

Almost all future parents are working full time, and the few that are not are working part-time. The same is true for the spouse/partner of those that indicate they have one. None of the respondents or their spouses/partners works as-needed/on call or does not work.

**Table 25: Employment Status of Future Parents**

	Knoxville Area		Pella Area	
	Self	Spouse	Self	Spouse
Full-Time	7	6	31	28
Part-Time	2	1	0	1
As-needed/on call	0	0	0	0
Don't work	0	0	0	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Manufacturing is the largest overall industry of employment among parents that completed the survey, followed by health care, and finance and insurance. Education is also a popular industry in some markets, especially Pella where there is a college and private schools in addition to the local public school district. Industries of employment are similar among future parents.

**Table 26: Industry of Employment of Current Parents**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher-		
			Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Manufacturing	2	43	6	107	4
Education	0	16	0	86	3
Health Care	3	16	2	55	9
Finance & Insurance	1	9	0	15	6
Retail	0	3	0	11	0
Food Service	0	0	0	8	0
Professional & Technical Services	0	3	0	8	0
Government	0	9	0	5	2
All Other	1	13	0	48	9

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Table 27: Industry of Employment of Future Parents**

	Knoxville	Pella
Manufacturing	4	15
Education	1	6
Health Care	0	5
Finance & Insurance	1	1
Retail	1	0
Food Service	0	0
Professional & Technical Services	0	2
Government	0	0
All Other	2	2

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Respondents were asked if child care challenges keep them or their spouse/partner from working, or limits their employment. Overall, 152 indicated that "yes" it has affected them, their spouse/partner, or

even both. Additionally, 7 future parents indicated they believe child care will affect their or their spouse/partner's employment.

Summary of comments from those indicating child care challenges are limiting their or their spouse's/partner's employment or preventing them or their spouse/partner from working:

#### Knoxville Parents

- *No weekend DHS approved daycare providers in my area.*
- *Daycare we use closes at 5 pm so cannot work any later.*
- *We have a great in home day care provider, but it is tough for my husband to pick her up at 5:00 coming from Pella.*
- *I bring my work home due to needing to pick up child by 5:30 or sooner. Also limits our weekends to work.*
- *Limiting my employment, coming in late and leaving early.*
- *I'm a nurse working three 12 hour shifts per week and had to change my work schedule to weekends only when returning from maternity leave. Childcare centers in Knoxville do not offer part time infant care and there were no openings at in-home daycares that I trusted.*
- *He works an adjusted schedule because of my early morning work schedule and the time that daycare begins.*
- *Must leave home 45 minutes before work to drive ten minutes out of town for daycare.*
- *It is too difficult with my schedule and the options for childcare hours for him to find a job that would make it worth him working rather than being the stay home parent.*
- *I'm unable to afford child care, therefore, I have to limit my hourly work week to part-time to stay home and care for my child. (Future parent)*

#### Melcher Dallas Parents

- *Before work*
- *No childcare available*
- *Within the Melcher-Dallas area we do not have certified daycare options, some in home daycare is available, however, can be unreliable at times which creates conflict for my spouse and I to work a consistent 12 month schedule.*
- *No child care around Melcher for after school.*

#### Pella Parents

- *Childcare is so expensive, I would have been working for less than \$100/month. So I had to give up my career and become a stay-at-home mom. It makes me feel ashamed and like I have no options.*
- *I'm limited what I can work because I have no childcare that can transport children to and from activities after school.*
- *I work full-time out of town, very hard to find a provider who is available early (6:00 am) and late (6:15 pm) who I can afford.*
- *My husband will have to work overtime and go in at 4:50 am, which is fine unless I am at work. I work 12 hour (7 pm- 7 am) in Des Moines so currently I only work part time so we don't have to worry about child care when my husband works overtime.*
- *5:30 pick up time is often an issue for me. I'm scheduled to work until 5:00, but I work in health care and patients can often require me to stay later.*
- *The only shift work I can get is nights, and there is limited night child care.*



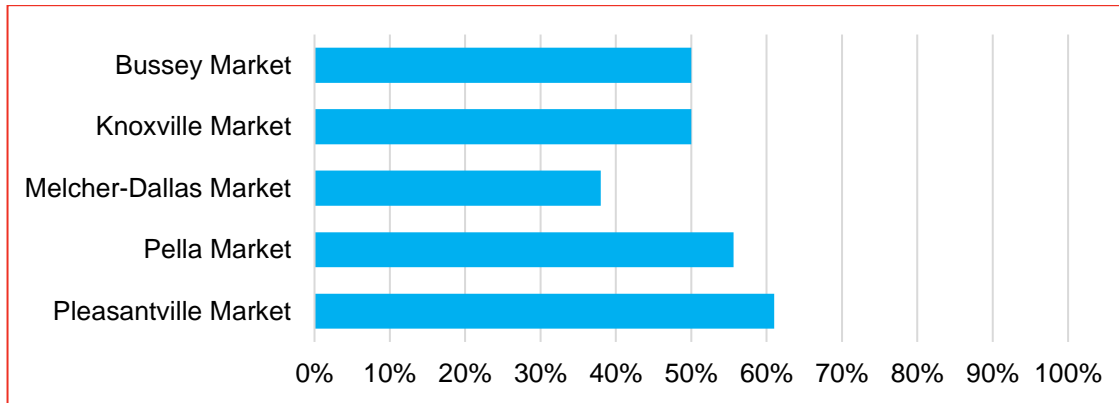
- *...currently I bring her to work and hope we can stay occupied so I can work a bit more.*
- *Grandma watches our children...the anxiety of leaving her there makes me not work as late and not always get everything done that should be. I would love to send her to a center but we are scared that it may be too pricey.*
- *I can't afford childcare so I can only work when my mom doesn't, so she can watch my daughter.*
- *He cannot go back to work because we can't find part time child care.*
- *She has to work extra since I can't work overtime... she goes in sooner and gets off sooner.*
- *My husband often has to leave work earlier than he would like to in order to get our son after school and on early out days.*
- *She can't work full scheduled hours because of lack of childcare.*
- *Need to adjust hours for care on early outs and no school days.*
- *Not directly as of yet, but we are expecting. Through my research, childcare costs are high and the limited number of childcare facilities drives up the costs and makes it difficult to find child care. (Future parent)*
- *My husband and I are planning to have kids in the near future and are struggling to figure out how and when I will be working, if it will affect our finances, and whether I can afford to stay home. (Future parent)*
- *As a married individual without kids, we are very concerned about how/where we will receive childcare in the future and it has been a large concern between my husband and I about how we will maintain current employment within the area. (Future parent)*
- *It is very hard to find reliable child care in the area. (Future parent)*
- *My spouse will be working to move into roles at Vermeer to have a better childcare experience. (Future parent)*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *I work 12 hour shifts. Starting at 6 am. Drop off is too early for most places. I've had to limit the time at work.*
- *I need multiple daycare providers to meet my schedule.*
- *They limit the hours I can work and limit me from working out of the county because I can't get back by 4:30 (time that in home daycare closes).*
- *We both are on limits for our attendance on our jobs due to issues with no sitter for sick kids.*

In 4 of the 5 markets, 50% or more of families are using paid or "outside" child care (someone other than themselves or another family member) as their primary form of care. Pella and Pleasantville have the highest percentages of families using paid or "outside" care at 56% and 61% respectively. In Bussey and Knoxville 50% are using paid care, and in Melcher-Dallas only 38% are using paid care.

**Figure 12: Respondents Currently Using Paid Child Care<sup>14</sup> as Primary Form**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

The reasons families are not using paid care varies by market, but in 4 of the 5 markets the top 2 reasons are, families choosing to have one parent be a stay-at-home parent or they are adjusting their work schedules so that outside care is not needed. Other reasons include family members watching the children and not being able to find an appropriate option.

**Table 28: Reasons for Not Using Paid Child Care**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher-Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Chose to be stay-at-home parent	1	11	0	56	3
Parents adjust work schedules	3	18	1	54	3
Family member or child home alone	0	9	1	19	1
Can't afford	0	9	1	16	2
Can't find appropriate option	0	9	1	11	4
Unemployed parent stays home	0	0	1	1	0
Other	0	3	1	8	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Summary of comments about not using paid child care:

Knoxville Parents

- *We have an older sibling watch our younger children or find friends to help out because child care is too expensive & there are not a lot of options in Knoxville.*
- *Our hours at work coincide with school hours.*
- *We cannot afford the cost of full time daycare, forcing to become a stay at home parent and working part time hours.*
- *We adjusted our work schedules to meet our childcare needs because the childcare option we needed was not available. We could not afford the full time option for an infant in a childcare center, when she would only be there 2-3 days per week.*
- *Family support-grandma watches kids 3 days/wk.  
I can take my child with me.*

Melcher-Dallas Parents

- *We couldn't find reliable care for our child, so his siblings watched him.*

<sup>14</sup> Includes care that is subsidized or scholarship, even if at no cost to the parents.

#### Pella Parents

- *I chose to stay home. Unless being in an administrative position, I can't afford to work FT and put her in child care. I might get a PT job in the evening so we can avoid childcare costs.*
- *I work from home.*
- *I am a child care provider.*
- *Teenage siblings at home.*
- *Do not need it-older siblings or grandparents watch child when we (parents) are working.*
- *My [child] is responsible enough to stay home after school and during the summer. Life skills are taught and emphasized in our home.*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *My mom watches them. She is retired.*
- *We both work at the school, so we are on our kids' schedules. If needed, we have family in the area.*
- *Nothing available.*
- *No centers or providers that will accept state funding.*

Parents that currently have children age 12 or younger were asked if their child care arrangement had affected their or their spouse/partner's job in the last 12 months. A list of possible affects were presented and parents were instructed to select all that apply. The most common problems resulting from child care challenges were missing a day or work, leaving work early or arriving late, and being unable to stay late. A majority of parents in each community indicated they had experienced at least one of the possible challenges listed.

**Table 29: Problems Experience in Last 12 Months due to Child Care Challenges**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher-Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Missed a day of work	3	30	3	109	12
Left work early	3	31	3	98	12
Unable to stay late	2	24	3	100	13
Arrived late or were tardy	2	16	3	70	9
Unable to change schedule/shift	2	4	2	44	9
Unable to travel	1	5	1	30	4
Lower productivity	0	5	2	15	3
Lower quality of work	0	3	1	10	4
Disciplinary actions or demerits	1	3	1	4	0
Quit a job or got fired	0	5	0	4	0
Did not keep/accept a job	1	3	0	13	1
I experienced no problems	0	22	0	59	2

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Summary of comments about child care challenges affecting parents' job:

Knoxville Parents

- *Missed days of work when child was sick.*
- *Had to get a second job to pay for daycare and can't spend time with my kids.*

Pella Parents

- *Moved to area at the beginning of year, difficulty finding daycare and drove over an hour for daycare until recently.*
- *I am a nurse and work some 10:00 a.m.- 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.- 3:00 a.m. shifts and my husband works 3:00 p.m.-2:00 a.m. shifts. My sister picks our daughter up from daycare because we can't and we pay her to keep her overnight while we work.*
- *Unable to go in early for overtime, even when it's mandatory.*
- *My husband or I do have to miss work if our sitter is sick or gone.*
- *Feel the pressure to do job well and a need/desire to be there but can't all of the time.*
- *Have to use full time daycare when we only need 2 days a week.*
- *Unable to apply for upper level full time position.*
- *Daughter was sick, and we miss work.*

Parents were also asked if there are changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow them to perform better at work. Thirty-seven percent (37%) indicated "yes" there are. Frequently named changes were longer child care hours, transportation to and from school/preschool, and more space within regulated programs.

Summary of comments about how changes to child care would improve work performance:

Knoxville Parents

- *Consistency. Having fewer last minute cancelations on being able to provide care.*
- *Less expensive (stress).*
- *To be available on weekends.*
- *Better located.*
- *If daycare provider could take sick kids.*
- *Have quality, trustworthy child care that provides transportation or have preschools that provide transportation. We cannot afford the preschool/daycare center since we both work and do not qualify for any assistance. It is extremely stressful trying to figure out 4 days a week how I am going to drop off and pick up my child from preschool.*
- *My current provider does not provide transportation to or from preschool.*
- *Pay every other week would be easier to help accommodate our pay cycles.*
- *If I didn't have to rush to get through my work in order to get off on time to make it to the child care center I'm sure I could pay more attention to details. I'd rather slack at work rather than pay \$5 extra for every minute I'm late to pick up my child.*
- *Earlier drop off times.*
- *Keep the sick kids away from my child.*

Melcher-Dallas Parents

- *The in-home daycare closes at 4:30. My work hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. I'm lucky to be able to work from home, but I wish I had the option of later pick-up time.*

- *More reliability.*
- *Transportation to and from preschool. Not having to take off work unexpectedly due to illness or taking days off due to [the provider's] vacations.*

#### Pella Parents

- *Part time child care available at infant and toddler ages.*
- *If the child care was CPR certified, had more room, the lady lets kids with fevers come to day care which gave our 3 month old a 103 degree fever and we had to go to the E.R. Less expensive.*
- *Have flexibility with the days of the week my children can attend and/or allow drop in care.*
- *Later hours to cover people who work 12 hour shifts in the medical profession, as well as only having to pay for the time the children are at the facility.*
- *Earlier and later hours.*
- *Have better options for backup sitter.*
- *Better hours of operation, don't charge extra rate if over 10 hours.*
- *Just affordability.*
- *Include vegetarian food options in meals.*
- *Staying open beyond 5:30 -6:00 p.m. is ideal.*
- *The children would benefit educationally if summer childcare was available in an educational setting that opened in time for a 5:00 a.m. start time.*
- *If an institution has space for all 3 that would be great. Before and after school care is hard to find.*
- *Pay per hour. I would even pay more per hour if I didn't have to pay for all the time my kids weren't there.*
- *Add before school Kids Klub.*
- *With pick up having to be by 4:30, it is difficult having to leave work that early.*
- *If I felt they would better understand schedules and safe standards I wouldn't worry so much.*
- *Slightly longer hours and possible assistance.*
- *More summer care options for school aged children.*

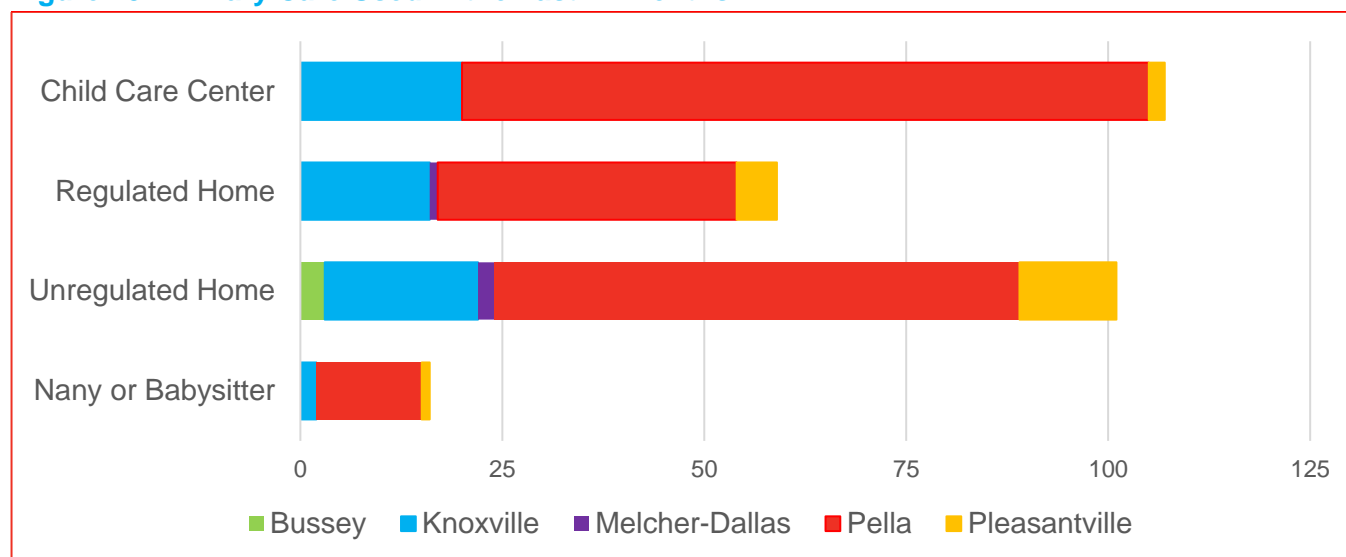
#### Pleasantville Parents

- *I have a complex child who is special needs. There are no daycare centers equipped to handle him or that are suitable for him during full daycare days. My child needs smaller classrooms and more staff/structure to be successful. The staff also need more training to deal with kids who have special needs, such as ADHD, autism or other behavioral or intellectual disabilities that make "regular" daycare challenging for them.*
- *Earlier drop off at my current provider. Or before and after school programs would be helpful.*
- *Open later.*
- *Open earlier.*
- *A child care center would be nice and would offer better hours. I'm concerned about the cost if Pleasantville did get one.*

Among families that are currently using paid child care as their primary for of care, the most common setting currently being used is child care centers (including preschool programs and Head Start). The second most common is unregulated homes, followed by regulated homes.

More parents would prefer to use a child care center than what currently are. If selecting care in the future, current parents indicate they would actually prefer child care centers, followed by the child being cared for by themselves or their spouse/partner. While there is some difference in markets, when considering only paid or outside care, the top preferences are consistently child care centers and regulated homes.

**Figure 13: Primary Care Used in the Last 12 Months**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Table 30: Current Setting of Those Currently Using Outside Care**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher-Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Child Care Center	0	20	1	85	2
Regulated Home	0	16	1	37	5
Unregulated Home	3	19	1	65	12
Nanny or Babysitter	0	2	0	13	1
Self or Spouse/Partner	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Family	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Table 31: Preferred Setting of Those Currently Using Outside Care**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher-Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Child Care Center	0	22	1	83	7
Regulated Home	2	7	1	41	6
Unregulated Home	1	4	0	9	0
Nanny or Babysitter	0	4	0	11	0
Self or Spouse/Partner	0	17	1	45	7
Other Family	0	1	0	5	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Similar to current parents, future parents also prefer regulated child care settings. In both Knoxville and Pella the top choice is a child care center. In Knoxville, the second choice is for a parent of spouse/partner to care for their child, while in Pella it is a regulated home provider and then a parent.

**Table 32: Preferred Setting of Future Parents**

	Knoxville	Pella
Child Care Center	2	16
Regulated Home	1	6
Unregulated Home	0	1
Nanny or Babysitter	1	2
Self or Spouse/Partner	2	5
Other Family	0	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

When current parents were asked if their children are in their preferred type of care, only 69% of parents said their children are. The reasons as to why their children are not currently enrolled in their preferred type of care varied by community. Parents were given a list of common reasons and were asked to select all that apply. The most common are families not able to afford and providers not accepting enrollments.

**Table 33: Reason Children are Not in Preferred Type of Care**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher-Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Not able to afford	0	8	0	43	5
Not accepting enrollments	0	3	1	20	4
Not open for extended or nontraditional hours	0	2	0	20	6
Not conveniently located	3	3	1	9	4
Other	2	2	0	5	1
Location too far away	1	1	0	1	5
Children are not the right age	0	0	0	3	0
Children are in my preferred type of care	3	42	1	135	10

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Reasons given by those that selected "Other"

Knoxville Parents

- *My sister started watching our kids due to cost of other child care, no flexibility for part-time or change in hours. Hard to find childcare for more than one child.*
- *With the number of children we have, we would prefer a Nanny. However, no qualified candidates in the area.*
- *We pay much more than we'd like to for childcare services because we need an in-home nanny. I would prefer to enroll my children in a daycare center for the social atmosphere and enrichment activities however the biggest challenge for us is transportation. School drop offs are after my work hours start, pick up is before I'm off work, plus we enroll our kids in sports and after school activities that require transportation.*



#### Pella Parents

- *Lack of dietary options (Vegetarian/Vegan) meals for kids.*
- *Lack of structured learning activities.*
- *I would love if my provider were state certified.*
- *We would prefer an in-home daycare. Everyone I called would not accept us for various reasons such as teacher's kids only, full time only, has to be a minimum number of days, etc. Some providers even refuse to return a phone call or give any other potential names.*
- *Our oldest child needs separate child care from our other children a few days a week during the summer because our sitter does not take kids past pre-school age. We are happy with everything else.*
- *I prefer a center-which my kids are in-however, I wish there were other centers to choose from. We are not currently happy with our center.*
- *My infant is watched by family because of cost issues*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *Prefer that my children were able to attend the same daycare all year around. There are no local daycare centers. In home providers' hours are not long enough for my work day.*
- *My children attend a daycare center [in another school district] during the summer. ...location, convenience and extended hours are my primary motivators for using it.*

Overall, most parents prefer child care within the community where they live, but not all parents are currently able to find care in their community. In Bussey, 2 of 3 parents indicated they are currently using care in the community but all 3 would prefer to. Parents in Knoxville, are primarily using care in Knoxville and Pella, however more would like to use care in Pella than what are currently. This could reflect parents that work in Pella that prefer to have their child in care close to where they work. All parents from Melcher-Dallas indicated they would like care in the community where they are currently accessing care. Parents in both Pella and Pleasantville would prefer to use care in their own community, but a few are currently using care outside the community. Those living in Pella that indicated they are currently using care outside of the county are going to Monroe (2), Oskaloosa (2), Reasnor (1), Eddyville (1), and Sully (1). The family from Pleasantville that indicated they are currently out of Marion County for care is using care in Pleasant Hill.

As a whole, current parents prefer child care that is located within the school district where their children attend or will attend when they are older. This was the most popular choice in all 5 markets. In Bussey, 100% of parents prefer this, in Knoxville 42%, Melcher-Dallas 67%, Pella 34%, and Pleasantville 60%. While this was the highest in Pella, it is not significantly higher than the percentages that prefer care that is close to home, and care that is close to work.

Future parents in Knoxville and Pella are split between preferring care that is close to work and within the school district where the child will attend.

**Table 34: Location of Child Care**

	<b>Bussey</b>		<b>Knoxville</b>		<b>Melcher-Dallas</b>	
	<i>Current</i>	<i>Preferred</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Preferred</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
Bussey	2	3	1	1	0	0
Hamilton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harvey	0	0	1	0	0	0
Knoxville	1	0	41	35	1	1
Marysville	0	0	0	0	0	0
Melcher-Dallas	0	0	1	1	1	1
Pella	0	0	10	15	0	0
Pleasantville	0	0	2	1	1	1
Swan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outside of Marion County	0	0	1	1	0	0

	<b>Pella</b>		<b>Pleasantville</b>		<b>Future Parents</b>	
	<i>Current</i>	<i>Preferred</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Preferred</i>	<i>Knoxville</i>	<i>Pella</i>
Bussey	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hamilton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harvey	0	0	0	0	0	0
Knoxville	3	0	1	0	4	0
Marysville	0	0	0	0	0	0
Melcher-Dallas	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pella	191	193	0	0	2	30
Pleasantville	1	0	17	20	0	0
Swan	0	0	1	0	0	0
Outside of Marion County	7	1	1	0	0	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Table 35: Preferred Vicinity of Current Parents**

	<b>Melcher-</b>				
	<b>Bussey</b>	<b>Knoxville</b>	<b>Dallas</b>	<b>Pella</b>	<b>Pleasantville</b>
Close to home	0	12	0	51	7
Close to work	0	14	1	56	1
In school district child attends/will attend	3	23	2	66	12
No preference	0	6	0	21	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Table 36: Preferred Vicinity of Future Parents**

	<b>Knoxville</b>	<b>Pella</b>
Close to home	1	7
Close to work	2	10
In school district child attends/will attend	2	11
No preference	1	2

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Most parents currently travel 0 to 4 miles one-way to child care. Parents that are traveling 6 to 15 miles or 15 to 25 miles likely include those living in unincorporated areas that are travel into town and those traveling from one community to another within Marion County.

**Table 37: Distance Traveled One-Way to Child Care**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
0 to 5 miles	1	35	1	137	14
6 to 15 miles	2	18	1	57	5
16-25 miles	0	4	1	6	1
More than 25 miles	0	0	0	0	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

The amount of child care paid per week varies by market and by age group. For infant care, most parents pay \$150 or more per week. For toddler care, most are again paying \$150 or more on average. Weekly tuition for children ages three- to five-years-old (but not yet in Kindergarten) is slightly lower at \$100-149 per week for the majority of parents. Collectively, \$50-100 is the most common weekly amount paid for before and after school care, while summer care for school age is \$100-149. Among those with children enrolled in preschool, the majority pay \$1-49 per week.

**Table 38: Average Weekly Infant Tuition paid by Current Parents**

Infant	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
\$0 (Scholarship or Assistance)		1		6	1
\$1-\$49		1		3	1
\$50-\$99				6	1
\$100-\$149		3	1	14	3
\$150-\$199	1	3		17	
\$200+				15	

**Table 39: Average Weekly Toddler Tuition paid by Current Parents**

Toddler	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
\$0 (Scholarship or Assistance)		1		3	
\$1-\$49		2			2
\$50-\$99		2		10	
\$100-\$149		11	1	25	4
\$150-\$199	2	5	1	32	
\$200+		2		14	

**Table 40: Average Weekly Three- to Five-Year-Old Tuition paid by Current Parents**

Three- to Five-Year-Old (Not in Kindergarten)	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
\$0 (Scholarship or Assistance)		1		2	
\$1-\$49		7		8	3
\$50-\$99		4		19	4
\$100-\$149		7	1	27	3
\$150-\$199		4		27	
\$200+		1		7	

**Table 41: Average Weekly Before and After School Tuition paid by Current Parents**

School Age (Before/After School)	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
\$0 (Scholarship or Assistance)				13	1
\$1-\$49		9	1	40	4
\$50-\$99	2	10	1	50	7
\$100-\$149		6		51	3
\$150-\$199		1		10	
\$200+				4	

**Table 42: Average Weekly Summer Care Tuition paid by Current Parents**

School Age (Summer Care)	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
\$0 (Scholarship or Assistance)		1		11	1
\$1-\$49		2		6	
\$50-\$99		4		16	3
\$100-\$149		9	1	35	8
\$150-\$199	2	9	1	37	
\$200+		2		11	

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

**Table 43: Average Weekly Fees Paid Per Child for Preschool**

	Bussey	Knoxville	Melcher- Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
\$0 (Scholarship or Assistance)		2	1	11	1
\$1-\$49		8	1	9	3
\$50-\$99		1		8	
\$100-\$149		2		10	7
\$150-\$199		1		7	
\$200+		1			

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

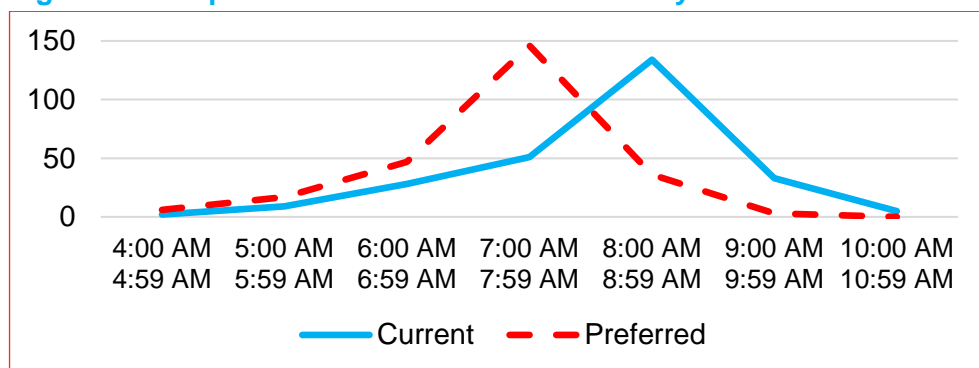
Most parents' needs in regards to time are met within the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There are a few that are currently using earlier or later times, and even more that would prefer to. Currently there are 11 parents using child care before 6:00 a.m., and 3 that use care after 6:00 p.m. When asked

what time they would prefer to drop-off and pick-up, 23 indicate they would prefer to drop-off before 6:00 a.m., while 22 would prefer to pick-up after 6:00 p.m.

In Bussey drop-off times were evenly spread between 5:00-7:59 a.m. The most popular drop-off time for families in Knoxville is 7:00- 7:59 a.m. and in Pella it is 8:00-8:59 a.m. Those living in Melcher-Dallas and Pleasantville, drop off slightly earlier (6:00- 6:59 a.m.). Future parents from both Knoxville and Pella prefer the same drop-off times as the current parents from their respective community.

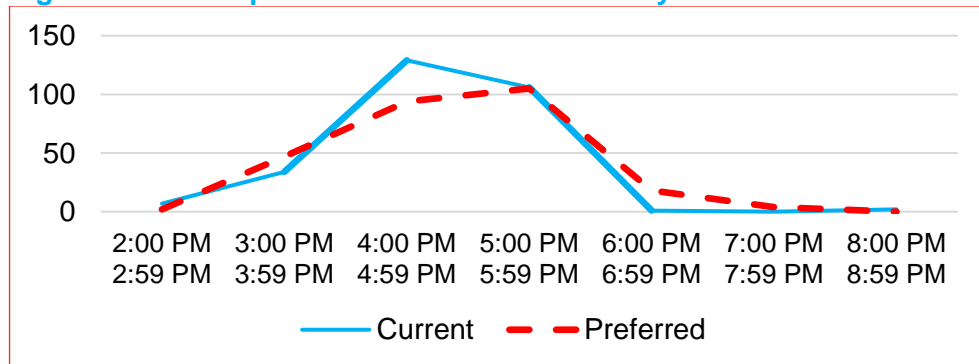
In Bussey, Knoxville, and Pella, the most popular time for pick-up is 4:00- 4:59 p.m. The Knoxville and Pella markets' second most popular time for pick-up is 5:00- 5:59 p.m., with almost as many families. In Melcher-Dallas the most popular pick-up time is 3:00-3:59 p.m., and in Pleasantville 5:00-5:59 p.m. In contrast to current parents, future parents in Knoxville indicate they will prefer a pick-up time of 4:00-4:59 p.m., and future parents in Pella prefer 5:00-5:59 p.m.

**Figure 14: Drop-off/Start Times of Marion County Parents**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

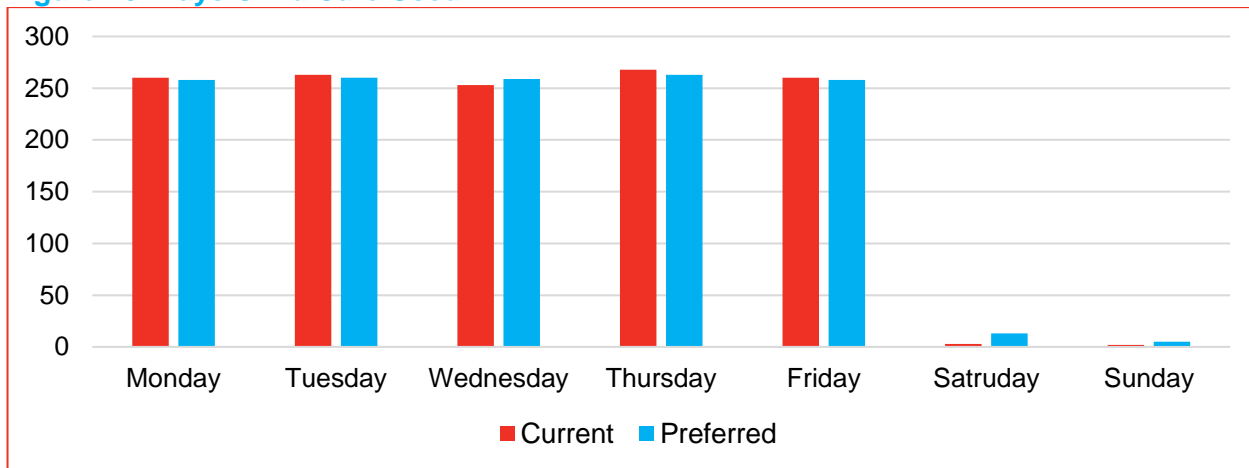
**Figure 15: Pick-Up/End Times of Marion County Parents**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

The days of the week parents use care is consistent across markets. Most respondents indicated they currently use care Monday through Friday (ranging from 90% to 100% per day), while only 3 respondents say they use care on Saturday and 2 respondents are using care on Sunday. When it comes to preferred days for care, Monday through Friday ranges from 92% to 95% per day, while 13 total respondents say they would prefer to use care on Saturday and 5 total respondents say they would prefer use care on Sunday. Similarly, future parents all indicate they will use care Monday through Friday, with just 2 from Pella indicating they will also use Saturday.

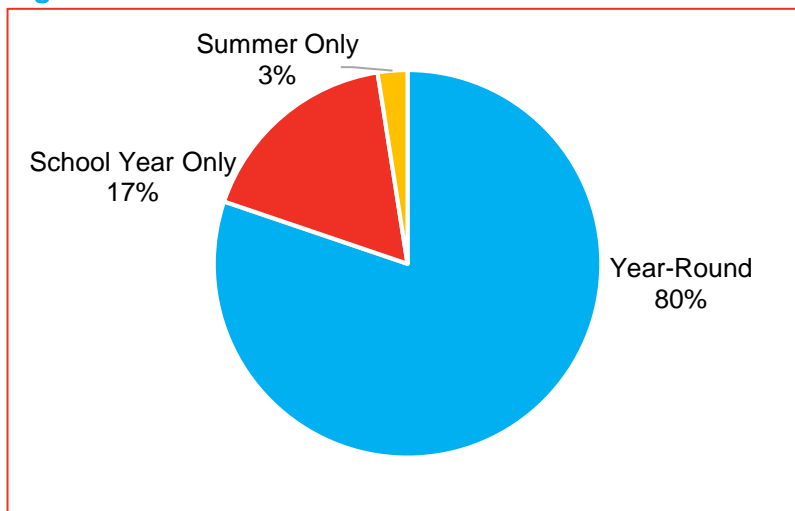
**Figure 16: Days Child Care Used**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Overall, 80% of families say they need child care year-round, 17% during the school year only, and 3% during the summer only. In Knoxville 87% of families are using child care year-round, while 9% are using it school year only, and 4% during the summer only. Pella parents responded similarly with 75% of families using care year-round, 22% school year only, and 3% during the summer only. In Bussey and Melcher-Dallas 100% of families indicate they use care year-round, while 95% of families in Pleasantville are using year-round and 5% using during the school year only. Results from future parents are similar with 85% preferring year-round, 11% school year only, and 3% summer only.

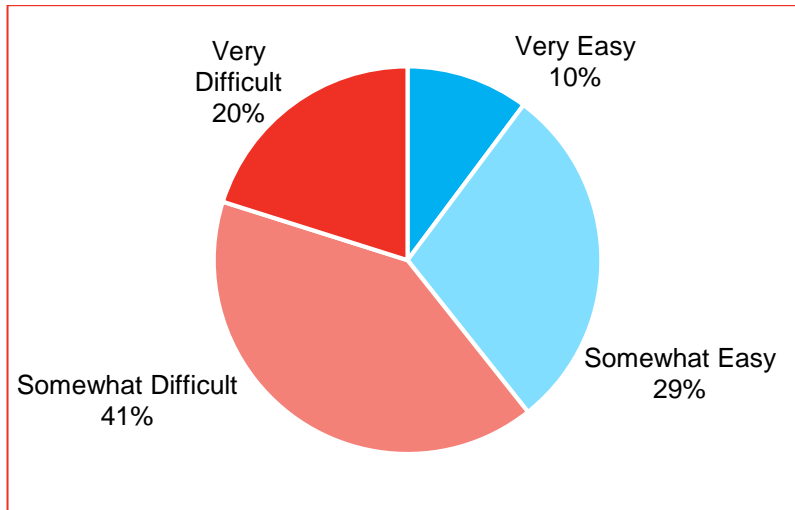
**Figure 17: Time of Year Families Prefer Child Care**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Parents in each of the markets indicated they had difficulty finding care, however in some markets it seems to be more difficult. One-hundred percent (100%) of the parents from Bussey and Melcher-Dallas, and 75% of the parents from Pleasantville indicated it was somewhat difficult or very difficult to find care. Parents from Pella also had difficulty, although slightly less with 62% indicating it was somewhat difficult or very difficult. Knoxville parents seems to have the least difficulty finding care, with only 46% indicating somewhat or very difficult.

**Figure 18: Difficult Finding Care**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Obstacles experienced in finding care:

Bussey Parents

- *Time frame that the provider is accepting child care.*
- *There isn't many options for the area.*
- *We had a difficult time finding childcare within the Twin Cedars district. We have utilized an unregulated in-home daycare most of my children's life until the daycare center opened at Twin Cedars. Our in-home daycare was very unreliable and would be closed on a whim. She took anywhere from 6-8 weeks off a year for various reason and really limited the hours I was able to work because we couldn't depend on her. We continued with her though due to the convenience of her location to the school and where we currently live.*

Knoxville Parents

- *It was hard to find DHS approved providers, the school had to tell me to go to WIC to get a list of providers the child care referral list didn't have a Knoxville provider and everyone on that list doesn't do weekends.*
- *Start times. My work starts at 5 in the morning.*
- *Finding one that didn't have too many kids already.*
- *They were full or not taking babies at the time.*
- *I cannot find quality child care that provides transportation which has forced us into putting our child into a non-registered provider.*
- *In-home daycares are full, other options are too expensive.*
- *There were no options. I had to take what was most convenient and close regardless of the rates. I want to use a child care facility that is regulated by the government and not someone's house. I feel like I work to pay for day care and nothing else.*

Melcher-Dallas Parents

- *The in-home daycares in Melcher-Dallas were full. I would like to find an in-home daycare in Pleasantville that had an opening.*
- *No regulated/certified provider within the Melcher-Dallas area.*



### Pella Parents

- *Difficult to find someone who would take children part-time and not charge for full-time.*
- *We have twins so it is difficult to find an in-home daycare provider that will take 2 the same age, as most have 1 opening or did not want to take on 2 infants.*
- *Lack of in-home providers who provide quality care and some structure for preschool age kids.*
- *It took me 6 months to find childcare when our daughter was an infant. No daycare center or home day care had openings for an infant. Once I found someone I had to wait a few months for an opening.*
- *Very few providers willing to consider taking on my children on a part-time basis. Even fewer willing to work with a varying schedule. I must either limit my work availability or pay full-time rates to “reserve a spot” in the daycare.*
- *Difficult to find a backup sitter if my sitter is not open due to her kids being sick, etc.*
- *There are not a lot of quality options. Care Center was literally the first (before family) to know we were pregnant to try to get a spot.*
- *As my child reaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade, it will be more of a challenge as I’m not ready for him to be home alone, but he will age out of most centers.*
- *When we first moved to town we were on a waiting list for a daycare center and struggled to find temporary in-home provider.*
- *Finding child care with infant openings.*
- *When we were looking for our toddler about a year ago the centers in Pella were full and over 15 in-home daycares were full. We ended up going with a gal in Plantsville because that’s all that was open, however we have now chosen to stay there because we love her!*
- *It’s hard to find multiple openings in the same daycare provider. I have 3 children, I could get the newborn baby at one daycare center and the 2 school agers at another building.*
- *When we moved to town, we were on a wait list for 9 months!*
- *Not knowing who to call.*
- *The local preschool and progressive kindergarten hours make finding daycare difficult. It’s not easy to find someone who would accommodate daycare hours around these half days or MWF schedules.*
- *I preferred to in-home in Pella but was unable to find one with any openings. I ended up bringing them with me to Oskaloosa, where I work, but it’s not ideal.*

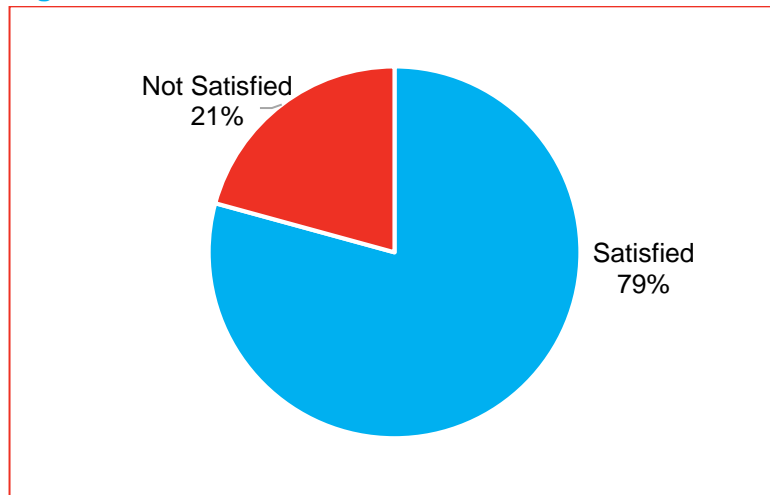
### Pleasantville Parents:

- *No local daycare CENTERS in our community. In-home providers are often full and are not open long enough for my particular workday needs. I work from 8-4:30 pm in Des Moines but cannot be home by 5 or even 5:30 most evenings.*
- *There are limited providers available in my area that open at 6 am to get to my job in Des Moines by 7 am.*
- *Limited options in our town, many close at 4:30 which doesn’t work for us, plus I work part-time and can’t afford to pay full-time daycare so that limits options more.*
- *Most daycare providers are full.*
- *No state registered daycare in Pleasantville. I have to travel to Knoxville every day and had to travel to Altoona daycare for two months until there was an opening in Knoxville.*

Despite difficulty finding care, once families find care, they are satisfied with their provider. Overall 79% of parents said they are satisfied with their current child care provider, while 21% said they are

not. The highest satisfaction rate by market, is in Bussey with 100%, followed by Knoxville at 84%, Pella at 80%, Melcher-Dallas at 67% and Pleasantville at 60%. Parents that indicated they are not satisfied were asked to share why.

**Figure 19: Satisfaction with Current Provider**



Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Reasons given by those that are not satisfied:

**Knoxville Parents**

- *Hard to find consistent, reliable, after hours child care. We rely on high school students mostly, but often the best kids, ones you trust the most, are the busiest due to activities. Also it's hard to book them very far in advance & have consistency.*
- *She doesn't do weekends.*
- *There is not school ready activities; they play video games and watch tv most of the day. I hate having to leave my child at a daycare such as this but short of quitting our jobs, we have no other options.*
- *I don't like that my schedule has to work around theirs. They should be there to provide for me so I can do what I need to support my family. I don't have it as bad now that I'm working closer to home in a job with a set schedule.*

**Melcher-Dallas Parents**

- *No structure for my children, no activities, lack of compassion for my child's development. Provider is looking for profit and keeps high numbers versus focusing on the quality of care being provide to the children.*

**Pella Parents**

- *We would like to be in a facility but the cost is too high.*
- *Our childcare provider does a good job, but we have to drive 12 miles outside of Pella one way to get our child there.*
- *I want my kids to learn while they are there, not be set in front of a TV.*
- *No problem with the child care, payment is high.*
- *There needs to be an activity program for kids ages 10-14 that keeps them from having to be home alone and get in trouble.*

- *Daycare in Pella need to provide food as per dietary restrictions for kids. Daycare's do not have vegetarian protein option in lunch.*
- *More options needed with qualified DHS providers.*
- *Summers are tough...2 children stay home with in-house sitter, 1 child to institution.*
- *Our children are currently in a daycare center that they do not like. They are separated from each other and it is not a relaxing environment. Plus it is very expensive!*
- *No before school Kids Klub.*
- *The staff at the daycare is not experienced in working with children. They are college students that are not able to positively motivate children and engage them in activities. My kids complained a lot that they were on their cell phones or "too tired" from the night before to do anything with them.*
- *The gal we are using right now is just temporary until we can find someone who is willing to take all 3 kids full time. She is currently only watching them for 4 months which is when the next opening at a center is.*
- *We have had issues once in a while and have looked for someone else but can't find anyone reasonable or priced right.*
- *For now they are fine but we have a baby coming in March and might need to make different arrangements then as my husband and I will continue working full time.*
- *I'd prefer somewhere in Pella.*
- *Center base care isn't flexible, so I regularly turn down career opportunities outside of our childcare contract.*
- *We have had multiple issue but have no choice but to stay where we are (to the point I have contemplated quitting my job).*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *I would prefer to be in a center type atmosphere that has a curriculum and projects.*
- *They close at 4:30.*
- *Based on different ages of children and availability/pricing with providers, my children don't all go to the same place and its inconvenient running around to multiple locations to pick up/drop off.*
- *Only because of the hours available to watch my children and when she needs to take time off I don't have a backup babysitter.*
- *Was the only available option.*
- *Not registered.*

Both current and future parents were asked to pick the one factor that is the most important to them when choosing child care. The top choices for both groups were related to staffing. In Knoxville (both current and future parents), Pella (both current and future parents), and Pleasantville the number factor for parents was dependable provider/staff. Parents in Bussey picked positive interactions between staff and child as their number one factor. The 3 parents from Melcher-Dallas chose 3 different factors.

**Table 44: Single Most Important Factor for Current Parents When Selecting Child Care**

	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Available space/timing of enrollment	0	2	0	9	1
Care includes preschool	0	0	0	3	0
Dependable provider/staff	0	24	0	75	8
Drop-in or occasional care	1	1	0	2	1
Educational curriculum used	0	1	1	11	0
Evening care (after 7:00 p.m.)	0	1	0	1	1
Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) rating	0	1	0	3	0
Location	0	0	0	3	1
Openings/Timing of enrollment	0	0	0	4	0
Part-time options	0	4	0	11	0
Positive interactions between staff and children	2	14	1	53	3
Second-shift care	0	0	0	0	0
Secured entrance	0	0	0	1	0
Special needs care	0	0	0	1	2
Third shift/overnight care	0	0	0	0	0
Transportation to/from school or preschool	0	2	1	5	1
Tuition assistance or scholarships	0	0	0	1	0
Tuition rates or price	0	3	0	7	0
Upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground	0	1	0	1	1
Weekend care	0	1	0	0	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

After identifying their most important factor, parents were given the same list and asked to select all other factors that are important to them. Dependable provider/staff and location were the two most popular factors for current parents in all 5 markets.

**Table 45: Other Important Factors for Current Parents When Selecting Child Care**

	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Available space/timing of enrollment	2	11	1	80	7
Care includes preschool	0	19	2	47	4
Dependable provider/staff	3	36	3	112	14
Drop-in or occasional care	1	12	1	51	4
Educational curriculum used	1	23	1	95	10
Evening care (after 7:00 p.m.)	0	4	0	11	4
Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) rating	2	9	1	29	2
Location	3	32	2	118	14
Openings/Timing of enrollment	1	19	1	68	5
Part-time options	1	16	1	67	6
Positive interactions between staff and children	2	33	3	109	13
Second-shift care	0	2	0	7	1
Secured entrance	0	17	2	52	5
Special needs care	0	2	0	7	0
Third shift/overnight care	0	1	0	3	0

			Melcher-		
	Bussey	Knoxville	Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Transportation to/from school or preschool	1	23	1	68	8
Tuition assistance or scholarships	0	5	0	11	4
Tuition rates or price	2	25	0	94	13
Upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground	1	25	3	91	9
Weekend care	0	5	0	8	2
No additional factors	0	1	0	0	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Among future parents the single most important factor in both markets, was dependable provider/staff, followed by positive interactions between staff and children, and then tuition rates or price. After identifying their most important factor, future parents were asked to select all other factors that are important to them. In Knoxville there was a tie for the important additional factors between positive interactions between staff and children, and upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground, with each being selected by 5 of the 6 parents. In Pella, the most popular other factor was positive interactions between staff and children with 23 of the 30 respondents, and tuition rates or price was second with 22 of 30 respondents.

**Table 46: Factor for Future Parents When Selecting Child Care**

	Most Important		Additional Factors	
	Knoxville	Pella	Knoxville	Pella
Available space/timing of enrollment	0	3	4	21
Care includes preschool	0	0	4	10
Dependable provider/staff	3	12	4	17
Drop-in or occasional care	1	1	1	5
Educational curriculum used	0	3	3	15
Evening care (after 7:00 p.m.)	0	0	0	2
Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) rating	0	1	2	5
Location	0	0	3	16
Openings/Timing of enrollment	0	0	3	14
Part-time options	0	0	3	9
Positive interactions between staff and children	1	6	5	23
Second-shift care	0	0	0	2
Secured entrance	0	0	1	10
Special needs care	0	0	0	1
Third shift/overnight care	0	0	0	1
Transportation to/from school or preschool	0	0	1	8
Tuition assistance or scholarships	0	0	0	4
Tuition rates or price	1	4	3	22
Upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground	0	0	5	18
Weekend care	0	0	0	0
No additional Factors	N/A	N/A	0	0

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Parents were asked if selecting child care today, would their needs ever significantly fluctuate, such as days of the week, shifts, or seasonal. A total of 23% said they would. Only Melcher-Dallas has no

parents indicate their needs would remain unchanged. The reasons needs would fluctuate vary by family, but most are relate to parent employment.

**Table 47: Current Parents Needs Significantly Fluctuate**

	Yes		No	
Bussey	1	33%	2	67%
Knoxville	9	16%	46	84%
Melcher-Dallas	0	0%	3	100%
Pella	48	25%	146	75%
Pleasantville	4	25%	16	75%
	62	23%	210	77%

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Reasons for the fluctuations:

Bussey Parents

- *I am currently part-time and my days during the week vary as to when we need care.*

Knoxville Parents

- *Our child care needs will increase when our child goes to school & I return to work on a more full-time basis.*
- *My husband's shifts alternate 2 weeks of days/2 weeks of nights, 5 on/3 off, so we always have a different schedule. I work early mornings and 2 evenings a week, and every Saturday morning, so flexibility is important to us.*
- *Part time during summer.*
- *Full day needed during summer and after school only during the school year.*
- *Start time and end time can change day by day, often have a day off during the week.*

Pella Parents

- *I am a nurse and work multiple shifts (10 am-10 pm) and different days each week.*
- *Work 8, 9, or 10 hours days and it is very unpredictable. Don't know until Friday what our hours are for the following week.*
- *I attend college so it depends on my course load and amount of homework.*
- *Our busy season at work is summer, that is when I need extended hours.*
- *I run my own business and my client schedule can change. Unplanned trips arise, needs for clients meetings come up and finding child care around this is a challenge.*
- *Next year I plan to keep all kids at home with a nanny in summer. Then all 3 will be in preschool or school full time from then on with one spouse working at home.*
- *Rotating days and hours.*
- *I work part time and want to be flexible on the days of the week I work to meet employer needs and take advantage of career development opportunities.*
- *After school only during school year; full days, flexible days each week in summer.*
- *Summer care not needed, teacher.*

Pleasantville Parents

- *No need for care over school breaks and summer.*

- *I'd only need it for back up situations.*
- *I'm a nurse and I don't work the same days or hours every week.*

A lower percentage of future parents indicate their child care needs would fluctuate significantly in the future. When asked to explain, reasons given were related to needing less care in the summer and considering a spouse that works second shift.

**Table 48: Future Parents Needs Significantly Fluctuate**

	Yes		No	
Bussey	0	0%	0	0%
Knoxville	1	17%	5	83%
Melcher-Dallas	0	0%	0	0%
Pella	4	13%	26	87%
Pleasantville	0	0%	0	0%
	5	14%	31	86%

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Reasons future parents expect fluctuations:

Knoxville future parents

- *School year need care, summer no care needed.*

Pella future parents

- *I work more at holidays and for wedding season.*
- *My husband works second shift, so some of the hours/days may vary depending on his schedule.*
- *Seasonally busier/less busy, maybe not full time during summer months.*
- *If my wife decided to work part-time and take care of a child/children part-time.*

The availability of child care in Marion County has impacted some respondents' decision to have/adopt children, or caused them to limit the size of their family. Almost all respondents noted reasons relate to either the availability of child care spaces or the cost of child care.

**Table 49: Child Care Impacting Having/Adopting Children**

	Current Parent		Future Parents	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bussey	0	6	0	0
Knoxville	19	90	1	5
Melcher-Dallas	2	6	0	0
Pella	74	281	10	20
Pleasantville	7	27	0	0
	102	410	11	25

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.



Sampling of comments about child care impacting having/adopting children:

Bussey Parents

- *Being able to afford more children in daycare would be our issue.*

Knoxville Parents

- *The cost for daycare is astronomical. We have a substantial income, but with 2 children using full time daycare, we can't afford any more. I basically work to pay for daycare and my student loans.*
- *Not necessarily the availability but the cost.*
- *Too costly.*
- *No daycares available or any we could afford.*
- *We couldn't afford to pay for more than one child in daycare at a time. Waited 5 years between children.*

Pella Parents

- *I've turned away foster kids because of no openings in state licensed facility that opened before 5 am.*
- *We both had heard daycare providers were hard to find, so it was definitely something we started exploring once we knew we were having children and becoming more pressing when we knew we were having twins.*
- *One reason we do not have another child is because we either do not like the child care options available or we cannot afford the options that we do like.*
- *Since I don't trust the family member who watches our child, and we're scared that it would be too much on our budget to go to a center, we have decided to put off having another child longer than we originally anticipated.*
- *The price of child care in Pella can get expensive and we cannot afford to have another child and have them in child care at the same time.*
- *Can't afford more than 1 or 2 kids in daycare and we have one of the least expensive options in Pella.*
- *Childcare is so much more expensive here than where we lived a year ago. There is no way we could afford childcare for another child at this point. I'd have to quit my job.*
- *It is extremely difficult to find child care that is affordable. When kids are not in school I pay almost half my paycheck to child care, and I make a good amount of money working at Pella Corp.*
- *We are currently waiting to have another because of the cost of daycare.*
- *We want more children and possibly through adoption, however we have decided against growing our family because we cannot afford childcare costs and we also cannot afford me to be a stay at home parent anymore.*
- *We have two children under the age of 7. Availability and cost of childcare certainly factored into our decision to stop at 2.*
- *The people at our daycare were the first ones I told I was pregnant since I signed up for a spot at 6 weeks—it won't work for us unless we have reliable care for the baby.*
- *I feel the educational centers available are very limited under the age of 5. (Future parent)*
- *Too EXPENSIVE! (Future parent)*
- *The cost of childcare has been a major discussion between myself and my fiancé when talking about whether or not we can afford to have children following marriage. Working at Vermeer,*

*I'd love to utilize the Vermeer Yellow Iron Academy, but know that it's still quite expensive and often difficult to get into. (Future parent)*

- *While we do not have children yet, my husband and I will have to continue to work full time after having children. The price of daycare is concerning as one of us will basically be working full time to pay for daycare. (Future parent)*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *It has made my husband and I talk about daycare more.*
- *Cost of childcare is more accurate. We now have preschool tuition but have the same daycare cost as before he was enrolled even though my provider has ½ the hours with him.*

Current and future parents were asked to rate the availability of child care in Marion County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 adequate, and 5 highly available (the higher the score, the more available). As a whole, parents do think the availability of child care in Marion County is less than adequate. In all 5 markets, the average rating was below 3.

**Table 50: Average Rating of Availability of Child Care**

	<b>Current Parents</b>	<b>Future Parents</b>
Bussey	2.50	N/A
Knoxville	2.57	2.67
Melcher-Dallas	1.63	N/A
Pella	2.63	2.30
Pleasantville	2.15	N/A

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

#### Sampling of comments related to the availability of child care:

##### Knoxville Parents

- *When I needed child care no day care could take my daughter because they were at capacity for the age group she was in. Didn't have a list of daycares to even call.*
- *There are not a lot to choose from, and many are full most of the time. Prices are high because of limited day care available.*
- *Not enough trustworthy providers that would assist in transportation.*
- *The only daycare facilities in Knoxville or Pella do not open until 6. We both have to be at work by 5 am.*
- *Have not checked or looked into availability. (Future parent)*

##### Melcher-Dallas Parents

- *Melcher-Dallas and Pleasantville only have in-home daycares. I've talked with many families that have had to change schools/jobs, just to accommodate taking their child to daycare in a bigger city.*
- *Limited availability in Melcher-Dallas.*

## Pella Parents

- *The few that are quality are continuously full and I can speak to that since I've been struggling with childcare for nearly 6 years now. I have nearly quit my job several times because of this issue.*
- *There are options out there but they are not always available. They are also limiting to the hours offered.*
- *Plenty of in-home daycares, none with factory hours which is what majority of our community works.*
- *Since the end of May I have received 4 requests to provide child care (that I have had to turn away) and two other providers have asked me if I have openings for people that have contacted them. My next projected opening is fall of 2020.*
- *Childcare that only runs during the school year and doesn't charge to hold spots is hard to find.*
- *Need...more state certified places that take assistance.*
- *People relocating have difficulty and sometimes have to split kids to find openings, or can't find cheaper in-home providers.*
- *The availability & quality of child care was a factor in choosing to be a stay at home parent.*
- *I remember when we first lived here, I was panicking to find a part time daycare caretaker or facility.*
- *I was using a child care facility in Pella but was told there is no more room for my child once he was done with Pre-School. I have had to adjust my work schedule to accommodate his Kindergarten schedule. At this time, I am uncertain what to do for summer child care.*
- *Word of mouth seems to be the best way to find out availability, which doesn't work if you're not plugged into the community with fellow parents.*
- *I reached out to every in-home provider in Pella via PACE. Only one had two part time openings that we needed and it was unregulated and poor quality. Only two of the three centers have part time openings.*
- *Each of my peers has expressed childcare frustrations in Pella. My wife stays home, for the second year now we have been asked to watch (and be paid for) a 2nd child 1 day per week.*
- *Wish there were more care facility options or more spaces at existing care facilities.*
- *Had to wait on a waiting list for almost a year.*
- *More CENTERS to choose from would be nice.*
- *Wait lists at the preferred places, no availability. (Future parent)*
- *There are only 2 educational centers available. I would prefer not to have my kid stay in someone else's home. (Future parent)*
- *I live in Pella, working at Vermeer. I started looking for childcare as soon as we announced we were expecting because I knew availability was low. I didn't find childcare until I was at least 30 weeks along (18 weeks of searching). I called at least 10+ childcare providers and was turned down before finding someone. (Future parent)*
- *Hearing from others who have been expecting, to find a place to take your baby is difficult...openings are hard to find unless it's the beginning of the school year. (Future parent)*
- *I've heard that it depends on the timing of when your child would need the care. (Future parent)*
- *My sister was searching for childcare as her husband works 2<sup>nd</sup> shift and she works night shift at the hospital. It was nearly impossible to find a place with openings! My sister has family watching her child overnight now. (Future parent)*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *Not enough providers and facilities. More money is needed for those who want to obtain education/training for licensure.*
- *Lack of child care centers and state assistance providers.*
- *We need more daycare centers in Pleasantville, it's a point that people pass from southern Iowa and would be a great place for a center.*
- *Depends on the time of year. Summer daycare options are non-existent. It tried hiring a student but the days are too long and my special needs child is too difficult for one person to manage.*
- *Can be hard to find openings in our area.*
- *I would really like to find affordable part time care.*

Parents ranked the quality of child care in Marion County slightly higher than the availability. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very low quality, 3 adequate, and 5 highly quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). Parents in all markets except Melcher-Dallas think the quality of child care in Marion County is adequate, ranging from 3.07 to 3.35. In the Melcher-Dallas market, parents ranked quality less than adequate, with an average 2.13.

**Table 51: Quality of Child Care in Marion County**

	Current Parents	Future Parents
Bussey	3.17	N/A
Knoxville	3.07	3.17
Melcher-Dallas	2.13	N/A
Pella	3.34	3.10
Pleasantville	3.35	N/A

Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

Sampling of comments related to the quality of child care:

#### Knoxville Parents

- *Quality is there with what is here, there just isn't enough options.*
- *Adequate simply due to the high quality options are very expensive and one's many parents can't afford to take advantage of.*
- *Ideal scenario would be to have a Montessori type of child care & preschool.*
- *I feel as if the child care in Marion County is not improving with modern day, stuck in the past.*
- *For me I have a great day care provider. Just the hours of operation and days off can be tricky at times. But for me the level of care that my child received is more important than time.*
- *Have not checked or looked into quality. (Future parent)*

#### Melcher-Dallas Parents

- *The few in-home providers that there are in Melcher-Dallas & Pleasantville, that I have heard about, provide quality care for the children.*
- *Very poor in the Melcher-Dallas area.*

#### Pella Parents

- *Those who are certified seem to be doing a great job, but they cost too much, and most of the home ones don't seem credible (or have proven that they aren't).*
- *I was able to find one person that was reliable and of good quality, I had some that would cancel and another that would watch tv while my 3yr old would get into things around the house and would often come home to a mess.*
- *The facilities that I have used...I have been very happy with.*
- *The childcare I did find was not very safe or nurturing (in-home day care).*
- *Limited labor pool and lower income role in society causes there to be regular turnover at the structured daycare locations.*
- *There are some good choices but they seem to fill up quickly. Some of the in-home child care is questionable in quality.*
- *The center we are at was once great, but has lacked significantly lately and there seems to be a lack on the director's part to give feedback. Also the educational part of the program has significantly gone downhill as well.*
- *In-home daycares or babysitters I have used are adequate but not fantastic. They almost always have some faults that I must overlook because I don't have much options.*
- *Care that's attentive, accepting & proactive of food allergies and dietary restrictions (that doesn't act like it's an inconvenience to have to feed child specific food we provide, or read labels to make sure there's not an allergic reaction).*
- *The babysitter we use is not registered. She only watches a couple children. I love this though. She is so caring to my son, and takes great care of him because of this.*
- *Limited education and play facilities. Current systems can be updated.*
- *Adequate if you're wealthy and/or have a 9-5 job. But not for jobs early morning (4 am Pella Corp.) or evening positions.*
- *Good facilities exist but most in-home options do not meet state regulations.*
- *We have heard terrible comments about [one center] and hear great things about [another center] but they do not have enough open spots, leaving families left to send their children to [the one center]. (Future parent)*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *What providers there are, are great people!*
- *Maybe for two parent families or for those who work locally child care may be just fine, but for a single mom with very few supports and a special needs child my options are severely limited or non-existent. If it weren't for Campfire before and after school program I would have to move out of the school district/community.*
- *Too many people just do it to be able to stay home with their own kids, they don't do it for long periods and are inconsistent.*

Both current a future parents were asked to share any additional comments they had about child care in Marion County.

## Summary of comments:

### Knoxville Parents

- *I've heard a lot of parents talk about desire for Knoxville to have childcare provided at Rec Center. This is an untapped market that some business/gym could take advantage of by offering childcare or mommy/parent & me classes.*
- *I have heard comments about finding good quality affordable day care but have not had an issue with my situation.*
- *I am confident in saying I'm not alone of my negative opinion of child care in Marion County, especially in Knoxville.*
- *We need more options, and more centers or in home daycare's that are inspected. Childcare providers that provide transportation to & from school is what is needed.*
- *We desperately need options for 2<sup>nd</sup> shift childcare.*
- *I think for moms & dads the most important thing is how our children are being cared for. When we leave our children to go off to work we want it to be with someone that cares for them like we do. It takes a special person to care for children on a daily basis. I think day care providers are under appreciated when they are taking care of our most precious gift, our children.*
- *Marion County is very rural and it would be nice if there were more availability for centers to be in the rural areas.*
- *Knoxville really needs a daycare place with weekend hours and open availability.*
- *Childcare providers who provide transportation to & from school is what is needed. We are running into no options to get him to school on late start Mondays.*
- *The price of child care is so high that if my spouse and I were to have more than one child, I would have to stay home. (Future parent)*

### Melcher-Dallas Parents

- *Melcher-Dallas and/or Pleasantville could benefit from a larger daycare/preschool facility.*

### Pella Parents

- *My biggest thing is having a place that will accommodate the early morning hours for us factory workers.*
- *I feel like I, along with many others, have valuable skills & experiences to offer the community and employers. But without affordable childcare, parents (typically women) can't share those skills because it financially doesn't make sense to work outside the home. We need more options in a city that is already expensive to live in.*
- *We need more daycares and more options. I only had 1 option, and thankfully she is a great fit!*
- *There needs to be a place that allows you to only pay for the hours your children are being watched. Not paid by the day or week.*
- *We have relocated our childcare to Jasper County to better service our family needs.*
- *Need more places and state certified, and [child care] assistance approved.*
- *It is very difficult finding child care during the time Pella Corp have working hours.*
- *Summer program that is cost effective is needed!*
- *I understand that our children are at a daycare provider or center for 8-10 hours a day and we want our children to be in the best care imaginable. I also understand that we need to pay the*

*providers decent wages so they too, can make a living. It just gets hard to grasp how much childcare is and how much it continues to rise.*

- *Need before school care for parents who work before 7:45 am.*
- *Although I use a child caregiver that is not authorized by DHS I would like to see more regulation in terms of sleeping arrangements, when and what food are provided, etc. Also limitations on screen/tv time and need for outdoor play.*
- *I think available child care centers should have a centralized location (online or somewhere easily accessible for families) that provides a list of contacts-this would be particularly beneficial for new move-ins, people who work shifts that don't allow for them to physically go to a building to see a list, and working families generally speaking.*
- *It amazes me that a town that is so much about family and community has so limited daycare options.*
- *Need more educational centers. (Future parent).*
- *I wish Pella Corporation worked with the community to provide childcare to its employees. (Future parent)*
- *We are in dire need of additional day cares and we need to hold [current centers] to higher standards. (Future parent)*
- *I do not know anything about it. I plan to have kids someday but have not done research on daycare. (Future parent)*

#### Pleasantville Parents

- *There are zero care providers in our area past 6 pm. My spouse is currently deployed and I have had to rely on random family and friends to help care for our child instead of being able to hire a dependable, responsible person to help me. This has caused tremendous stress in our household.*
- *There isn't many options for kids with special needs especially the ones over 12 that can't be on their own after school yet.*



## Child Care Gap Analysis

Determining the true gap in the child care market needs to consider multiple factors to be accurate. Not only are the current number of child care spaces and children considered, but also how many families prefer to use “outside” child care, in combination with how many want or need care full-time versus part-time. Based on full or part-time factors, one child care space might actually be adequate supply for two or three children. When preferences are considered, not all families who work need outside child care and not all child care slots meet the needs of every child.

The following summary of the demand for each of the markets provides an estimation of the gap between the number of children with all parents in the labor force and the number of spaces available in programs currently listed by Iowa DHS<sup>15</sup>. As solutions to address this gap are considered, each community must keep in mind that not all families will utilize outside child care, and those that do will have a variety of needs with some children attending full-time while others attend only part-time and therefore may share a space. If there was exactly one space for each child, some spaces would not be utilized, or would not be utilized at a level that would allow the child care provider to maintain a sustainable business model.

### Bussey Market

Within Bussey, there is currently 1 DHS licensed child care center that has a capacity of 24, and no home providers that are listed with DHS. Little Sabers Childcare Center opened in 2017, and rents space within Twin Cedars Elementary. They serve children ages 0 to 12, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. They have earned a Quality Rating System (QRS) rating of 1.

Parents from Bussey need child care year-round, Monday through Friday only. The majority prefers to be able to drop their child off between 5:00 and 7:59 a.m., and to pick them up between 4:00 and 4:59 p.m. When selecting care, the most important factor is positive interactions between the staff/provider and the children. They prefer care located within the school district where their child attends/will attend. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the parents from Bussey indicated their preference for child care is themselves or another family member, while 33% indicated they prefer a DHS Registered Child Development Home.

Because of the small sample size from this community, the preferences of all parents who completed the survey (regardless of where they live) likely gives a better representation. The preferred setting among all current parents (not just those that live in Bussey) for child care settings were 41% DHS child care center, 29% themselves or another family member, 20% DHS Registered Child Development Home, and 10% unregulated care such as a friend, babysitter, or nanny. Collectively, 71% prefer some type of “outside” child care, over themselves or another family member.

There are 143 children that have all parents working, if it assumed that 71% of those families desire some type of outside care, approximately 101 children need child care. Currently there are 24 licensed child care spaces in the community, which is enough to serve about 24% of the 101 children likely to use outside care, leaving a gap of 77 spaces.

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<sup>15</sup> Includes all Iowa DHS Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes listed with Iowa DHS as of February 2019.

**Table 52: Estimated Child Care Gap, Bussey Market**

	Children w/All Parents Working	Prefer “Outside” Care	DHS Listed Spaces	Child Care Gap
Infant/Toddler	17	12	4	-8
Two-Year-Old	14	10	6	-4
Three to Four-Year-Old	29	21	8	-13
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	82	58	6	-52
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>-77</b>

*Note: Data for Total Spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for Children with All Parents Working from First Children’s Finance (2019).*

At the time this report is being written, the owner of Little Sabers is working with the Twin Cedars School District to use an additional classroom. This new room is expected to be licensed for 17. Until the room is licensed by Iowa DHS the new capacity cannot be verified, however these new spaces should not be overlooked when discussing future solutions or the child care gap.

### **Knoxville Market**

In the Knoxville market there are both DHS licensed child care centers, and regulated home providers. Two (2) programs are licensed as a center, Montgomery Street Preschool and Stepping Stones Early Learning Center, both of which hold an Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) rating of 4. Montgomery Street Preschool serves children ages 2 to 5 on a part-time basis during the school year only, while Stepping Stones provides full-time care for children ages 0 to 12 year-round. In addition, there are 11 Registered Child Development Homes in Knoxville. The majority of these homes provide care between 5:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. There are 2 that provide care 7 days per week, and one of those is available 24 hours. Collectively these providers offer 513 spaces.

Parents from Knoxville need care year-round, Monday through Friday, and just a few also need care on Saturday and Sunday. The majority prefers to be able to drop their child off between 6:00 and 7:59 a.m., and to pick them up from 4:00 to 4:59 p.m. When selecting care, the most important factor to most parents was a dependable provider/staff. They prefer care located within the school district their child attends/will attend. Knoxville parents’ preferred child care settings are 40% DHS child care center, 33% themselves or another family member, 14% unregulated care such as a friend, babysitter, or nanny, and 13% DHS Registered Child Development Home. Collectively, 67% prefer some type of “outside” child care, over themselves or another family member.

There are 1,235 children that have all parents working, if it is assumed that 67% of families desire some type of outside care, approximately 828 children need child care. According to Iowa DHS, there are currently 513 child care spaces in Knoxville, which is enough to serve approximately 62% of the 828 children likely to use outside care, leaving a gap of 315 spaces. There is a gap among each age group except three- and four-year-olds, which has a surplus due to the combination of child care and preschool programs. When the 54 part-time, school year only preschool spaces are removed, the surplus for this age group drops to 1, and the overall gap grows to 369.

**Table 53: Estimated Child Care Gap, Knoxville Market**

	Children w/All Parents Working	Prefer “Outside” Care	DHS Listed Spaces	Child Care Gap
Infant/Toddler	226	151	93	-58
Two-Year-Old	119	80	69	-11
Three to Four-Year-Old	231	155	210	+55
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	659	442	141	-301
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>-315</b>

*Note: Data for Total Spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for Children with All Parents Working from First Children’s Finance (2019).*

### **Melcher-Dallas Market**

Proportionally, Melcher-Dallas has the least number of child care spaces available compared to the number of children. There is currently only one Registered Child Development Home that is a category B, allowing the provider to care for up to 12 children at a time.

Parents from Melcher-Dallas need care year-round, Monday through Friday only. The majority prefers to be able to drop their child off between 7:00 and 7:59 a.m., and to pick them up between 5:00 and 5:59 p.m. They prefer child care located within the school district their child attends/will attend. Parents were equally split on their preference for child care settings, with 1/3 preferring themselves or another family member, 1/3 a DHS child care center, and 1/3 a DHS Registered Child Development Home.

Because of the small sample size from this community, the preferences of all parents who completed the survey (regardless of where they live) likely gives a better representation. The preferred setting among all current parents (not just those that live in Melcher-Dallas) for child care settings were 41% DHS child care center, 29% themselves or another family member, 20% DHS Registered Child Development Home, and 10% unregulated care such as a friend, babysitter, or nanny. Collectively, 71% prefer some type of “outside” child care, over themselves or another family member.

There are 193 children that have all parents working, if it is assumed that 71% of families desire some type of outside care, approximately 137 children need child care. According to Iowa DHS, there are currently 12 child care spaces in Melcher-Dallas, which is enough to serve about 9% of the 137 children likely to use outside child care, leaving a gap of 125 spaces.

**Table 54: Estimated Child Care Gap, Melcher-Dallas Market**

	Children w/All Parents Working	Prefer “Outside” Care	DHS Listed Spaces	Child Care Gap
Infant/Toddler	54	38	3	-35
Two-Year-Old	21	15	3	-12
Three to Four-Year-Old	42	30	3	-27
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	76	54	3	-51
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>-125</b>

*Note: Data for Total Spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for Children with All Parents Working from First Children’s Finance (2019).*

## Pella Market

Pella has the largest variety of child care options among all communities in Marion County. There are 4 DHS licensed child care centers or preschools. Three (3) of these programs offer full-time, year-round child care for children ages 0 to 10 or 12 years old. The fourth program serves school-age children (children that have started Kindergarten through age 12) to provide before and after school care, and full-time care when school is not in session, including the summer. In addition, there are 6 DHS Registered Child Development Homes in the market; 5 in Pella and 1 in Otley. Hours of the home providers vary with a majority providing care between 5:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. There are 3 that are willing to accept children 7 days per week, and one of those is available 24 hours. Between the child care centers and homes listed by Iowa DHS, they provide 625 spaces.

Seventy-three percent (73%) of parents from Pella need care year-round, Monday through Friday, and a few also need care on Saturday. The majority prefers to be able to drop their child off between 7:00 and 7:59 a.m., and to pick them up between 5:00 and 5:59 p.m. When selecting child care, the most important factor to most parents was a dependable provider/staff. They prefer care located within the school district where their child attends/will attend. Pella parents' preferred child care settings are 43% DHS child care center, 26% themselves or another family member, 21% DHS Registered Child Development Homes, and 10% unregulated care such as a friend, babysitter, or nanny. Collectively, 74% prefer some type of "outside" child care, over themselves or another family member.

There are 1,482 children that have all parents working, if it is assumed that 74% of families desire some type of outside care, approximately 1,096 children need child care. According to Iowa DHS, there are currently 625 child care spaces in Pella, which is enough to serve approximately 57% of the 1,096 children likely to use outside care, leaving a gap of 478 spaces.

**Table 55: Estimated Child Care Gap, Pella Market**

	Children w/All Parents Working	Prefer "Outside" Care	DHS Listed Spaces	Child Care Gap
Infant/Toddler	243	180	87	-100
Two-Year-Old	137	101	52	-49
Three to Four-Year-Old	263	195	128	-67
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	838	620	358	-262
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>1,096</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>-478</b>

*Note: Data for Total Spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for Children with All Parents Working from First Children's Finance (2019).*

While Pella has a shortage of child care for the families that live in the community, that gap may be worsened by families that live in other communities. According to preferences among parents completing the *Child Care Needs Survey*, 37 families that live somewhere other than Pella, with a total of 77, children prefer outside child care located in Pella. Including these children increases the child care gap to 515.

**Table 56: Estimated Additional Children from Other Communities**

	<b>Total</b>
Infant/Toddler	6
Two-Year-Old	17
Three to Four-Year-Old	24
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

*Note: Data Units from First Children's Finance (2019).*

Pella is a growing community, with plans for new single-family housing units. Based on US Census population and household data, along with information from Marion County Development Commission, First Children's Finance has estimated if an additional 200 single-family housing units were built the community would gain approximately 71 additional children ages 0 to 9, and approximately 177 additional children if 500 housing units were built. If 71% of these children are placed in outside care, the child care gap would increase to 528, or 604, respectively. If both, children living in other communities and additional children associated with new housing units were included, the gap could grow to as large as 681.

**Table 57: Estimated Additional Children from New Housing**

	<b>Estimate Growth if 200 New Housing Units</b>	<b>Estimated Growth if 500 New Housing Units</b>
Infant/Toddler	13	32
Two-Year-Old	7	18
Three to Four-Year-Old	14	35
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	37	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>177</b>

*Note: Data for Estimated Growth for New Housing Units from First Children's Finance (2019).*

At the time this report is being written, the owner of De Kinderen Huis is finalizing plans for an expansion to add 5 classrooms. Until the new rooms are licensed by Iowa DHS the new capacity cannot be verified, however these new spaces should not be overlooked when discussing future solutions or the child care gap.

### **Pleasantville Market**

Pleasantville has 1 DHS licensed child care center, and 2 DHS listed home providers. The program licensed by DHS offers preschool for 3 to 5 year olds, two days per week, during the school year. One (1) home is a DHS Registered Child Development Home that offers care from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The other, a Child Care Home, offers care 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Collectively these providers offer 51 spaces.

Parents from Pleasantville need care year-round, Monday through Friday. The majority prefers to be able to drop their child off between 6:00 and 7:59 a.m., and to pick them up between 4:00 and 5:59 p.m. When selecting child care, the most important factor was a dependable provider/staff. They prefer care located within the school district where their child attends/will attend. Pleasantville parents' preferred settings are 35% DHS child care center, 35% themselves or another family

member, 30% DHS Registered Child Development Home, and 0% unregulated care such as a friend, babysitter, or nanny. Collectively, 65% prefer some type of “outside” child care, over themselves or another family member.

There are 239 children that have all parents working, if it is assumed that 65% of families desire some type of outside care, approximately 156 children need child care. According to Iowa DHS, there are currently 51 child care spaces in Pleasantville, which is enough to serve approximately 33% of the 156 children likely to use outside care, leaving a gap of 105 spaces. There is a gap among each age group except, three- and four-year-olds, which has a surplus due to the combination of child care and preschool programs. When the 30 part-time, school year only preschool spaces are removed, the surplus for this group becomes a gap of 19, and the overall gap grows to 135.

**Table 58: Estimated Child Care Gap, Pleasantville Market**

	Children w/All Parents Working	Prefer “Outside” Care	DHS Listed Spaces	Child Care Gap
Infant/Toddler	44	29	5	-24
Two-Year-Old	22	14	6	-8
Three to Four-Year-Old	39	25	36	+11
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	135	88	4	-84
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>-105</b>

*Note: Data for Total Spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for Children with All Parents Working from First Children’s Finance (2019).*

Pleasantville’s proximity to the Des Moines metro area is an advantage for future growth. With plans for new single-family housing units, the community is expected to gain population. Based on US Census population and household data, along with information from Marion County Development Commission, First Children’s Finance has estimated that if an additional 50 single-family housing units were built, the community would gain an approximately 20 additional children ages 0 to 9. If 65% of these children are likely to use outside care, the child care gap would increase to 118. If the part time preschool spaces are excluded and the additional children associated with new housing units were included, the gap would grow to 148.

**Table 59: Estimated Additional Children from New Housing**

	Estimated Growth if 50 New Housing Units
Infant/Toddler	4
Two-Year-Old	2
Three to Four-Year-Old	3
School-Age (5-9 Yrs.)	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

*Note: Data for Estimated Growth for New Housing Units from First Children’s Finance (2019).*



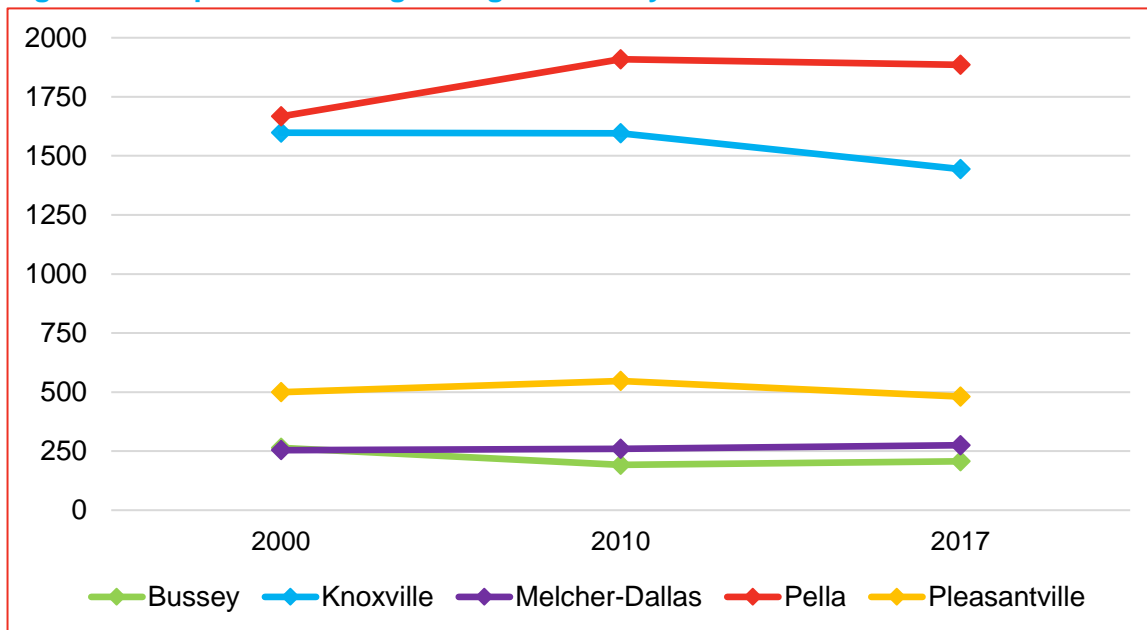
## Key Findings

These key findings are based on research and conditions of the current child care market in Marion County. If the community or the child care environment changes significantly, current findings may be affected.

### Population Ages 0 to 9 Decreasing in Some Communities, Increasing in Others

As of 2017, there were a total of 4,292 children ages 0 to 9 living in Marion County, which is down from 4,505 in 2010, but up just slightly from 4,282 in 2000. Some of the individual child care market areas have experienced growth among children, while others have declined. The Melcher- Dallas and Pella markets grew; while Bussey, Knoxville, and Pleasantville declined.

**Figure 20: Population Change in Ages 0 to 9 by Child Care Market**



*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2000, 2010, 2017)*

### Marion County Parents are in the Labor Force and Need Child Care

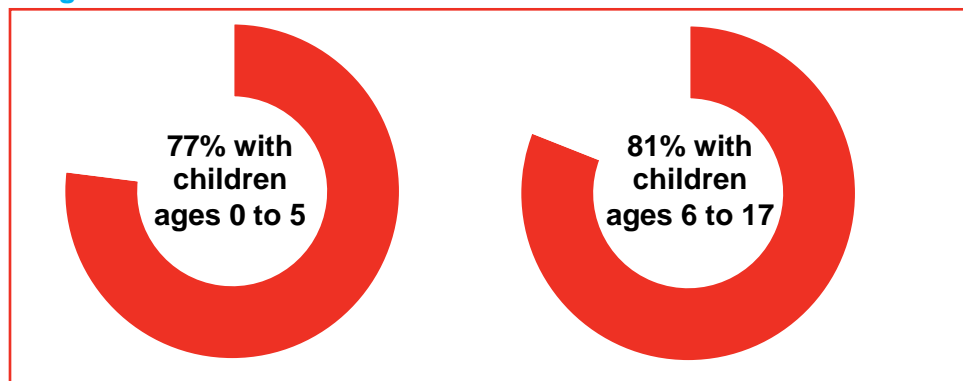
According to the US Census Bureau, 77% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 81% of families with children ages 6 to 17 in Marion County have all parents in the labor force. “All parents in the labor force” means if a family is headed by a couple, both parents are working and if it is a headed by a single parent that parent is working. This is in line with the state averages of 75% and 80% respectively.

The number of households with all parents in the labor force varies by individual markets, and by ages of children in the home. Those with children ages 0 to 5 and all parents in the labor force, varies from 67% in Bussey, to 79% in Knoxville, while those with children ages 6 to 17 ranges from 71% in Bussey, to 83% in Pella.

When households with children ages 6 to 17 have a higher percentage of all parents working than households with children ages 0 to 5 in the same market, it may be a reflection of parent staying home while their children are very young and (re)entering the labor force after the children are in school.

Knoxville is the only market where the percentage of all parents working is higher when the children are very young and lower when children are of the age they would be in school.

**Figure 21: Households with All Parents in Labor Force in Marion County**



*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2017)*

**Table 60: Households with All Parents Working by Child Care Market**

	With Children Ages 0 to 5	With Children Ages 6 to 17
Bussey Market	67%	79%
Knoxville Market	79%	77%
Melcher-Dallas Market	76%	76%
Pella Market	77%	83%
Pleasantville Market	72%	92%
Marion County	77%	81%
State of Iowa	75%	80%

*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2017)*

### Parents Prefer Regulated Child Care Settings

According to the *Child Care Needs Survey*, the most preferred child care arrangement by Marion County parents is DHS Licensed Child Care Centers, followed by Registered Child Development Homes. Overall, 36% of current parents indicated they are using a Licensed Center now, however 41% would prefer a Licensed Center; while 22% are using a Registered Child Development Home now, but 21% would prefer this arrangement. Currently, 35% are using an unregulated home, but only 5% would prefer this option.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of current parents that are currently using outside child care, indicated they would prefer that they or their spouse/partner provide the care, and 2% would prefer another family member care for their child.



**Table 61: Preferred Child Care Settings in Marion County**

Current “Outside” Settings		Preferred Settings	
Licensed Center	36%	Licensed Center	41%
Parent or Spouse/Partner	N/A	Parent or Spouse/Partner	25%
Regulated Home	22%	Regulated Home	21%
Unregulated Home	35%	Unregulated Home	5%
Nanny or Babysitter	7%	Nanny or Babysitter	6%
Other Family	N/A	Other Family	2%

Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

The number of parents preferring particular child care settings varies by market, and may be somewhat influenced by the type of care available in that community. If additional options were available in some of the markets, these preferences may change.

**Table 62: Preferred Child Care Settings by Child Care Market**

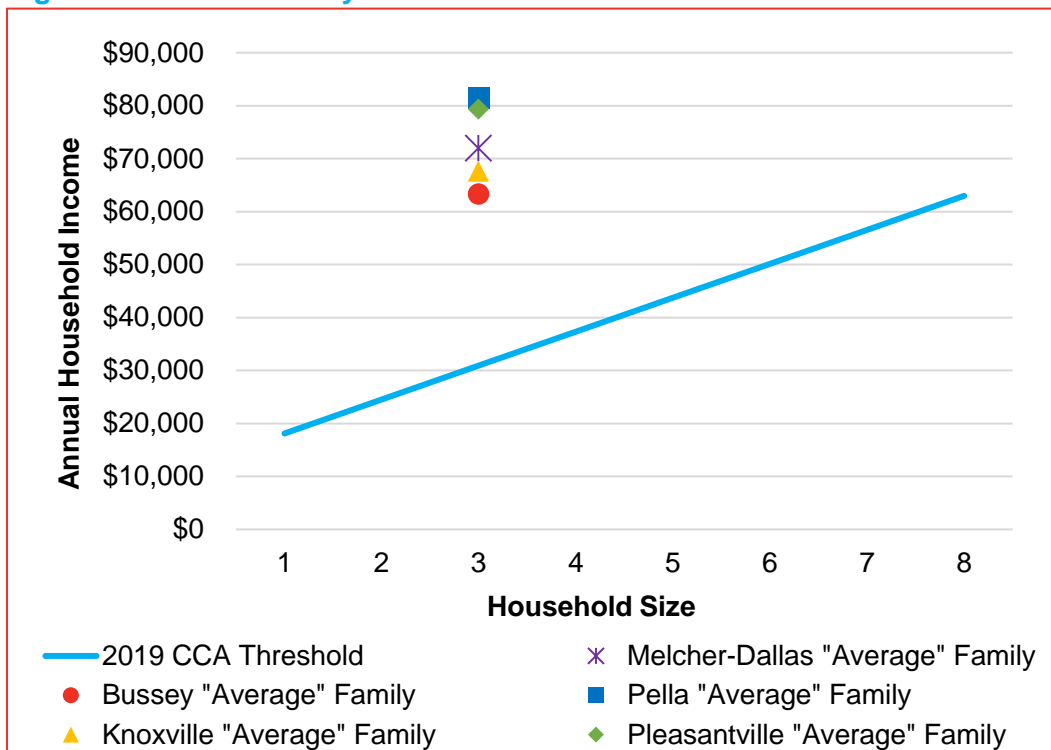
	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
Child Care Center	0	22	1	83	7
Regulated Home	2	7	1	41	6
Unregulated Home	1	4	0	9	0
Nanny or Babysitter	0	4	0	11	0
Self or Spouse/Partner	0	17	1	45	7
Other Family	0	1	0	5	0

Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

### **Median Family Incomes are Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold**

The median income for families with children under the age of 18 for Marion County is \$71,988 and the average family size is 2.97. To be eligible for the Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) program under the 2019 eligibility criteria, a family of 3 must have an annual household income below \$30,928. While many households with children exceed this threshold, it is possible they still struggle to pay child care expenses out of pocket. While the median family income does vary by market, it is well above the CCA eligibility threshold in each of the 5 markets.

**Figure 22: Median Family Income vs. Child Care Assistance Thresholds**



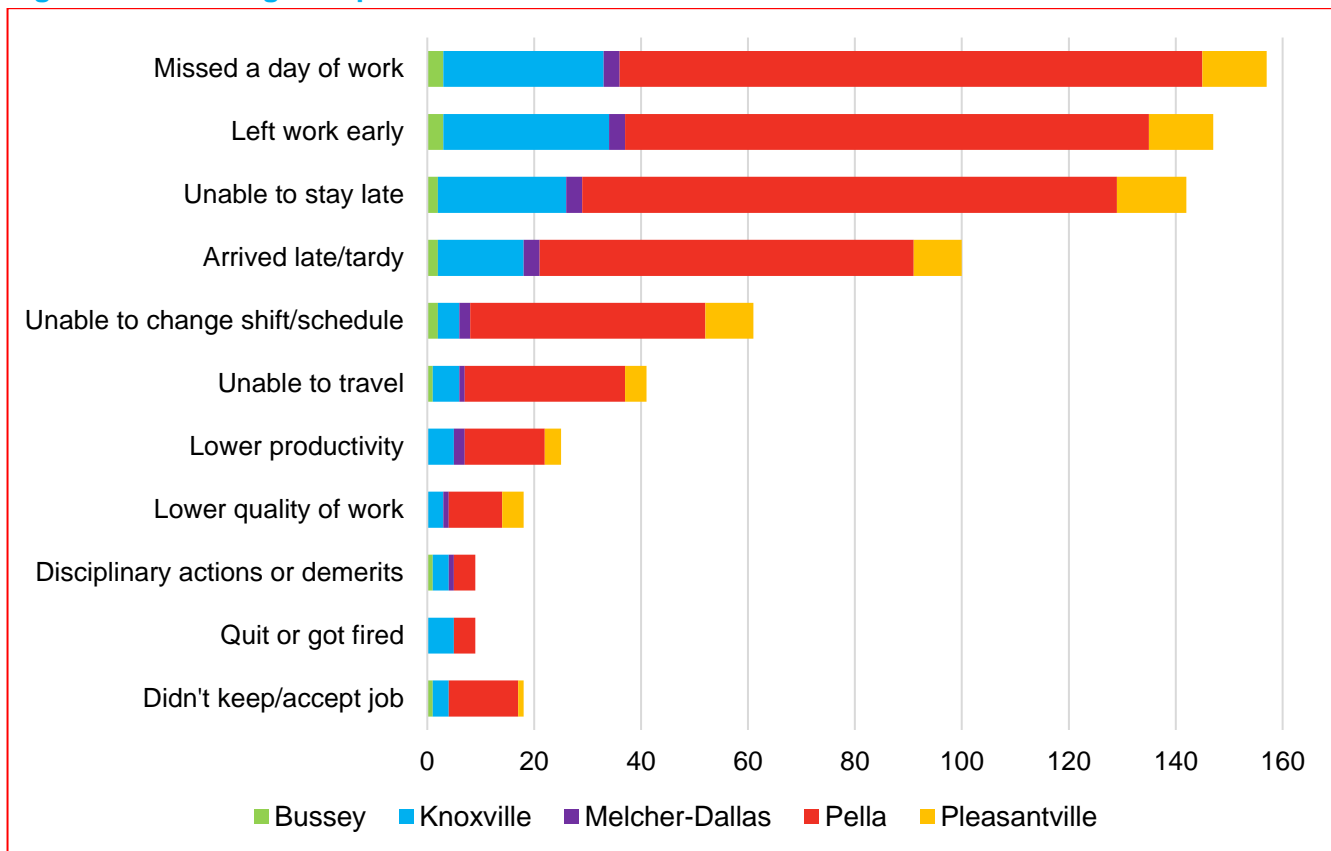
Note: Data for Child Care Assistance Thresholds from US Department of Health and Human Services (2019). Data for average family size and median incomes from US Census Bureau (2017).

### **Child Care is Affecting the Labor Force**

Over the last 12 months, parents in Marion County have had their jobs affected because of child care challenges. Most parents have missed a day of work, left work early or arrived late, had problems changing shifts or schedules, and produced lower quality of work. Others have quit or been fired, and some did not keep or accept a job they wanted.

In addition to affecting those with jobs, child care challenges are also keeping some parents from working or limiting their employment. Overall, 152 parents indicated child care challenges has affected their job, their spouse's/partner's job, or both. Some of the ways they were affected parent were: not working because they could not earn enough to pay for child care, not working because a child care space has not been secured, and a parent only working part time because the other parent works earlier/later than child care is available.

**Figure 23: Challenges Experienced Due to Child Care**

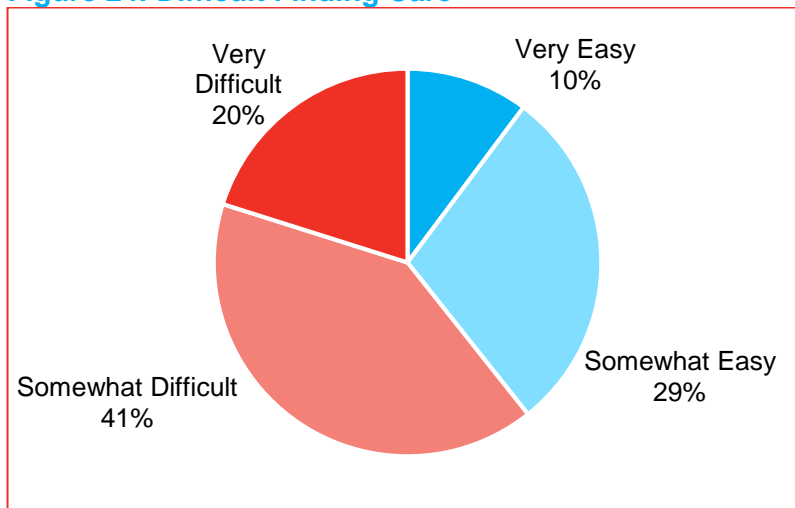


Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

### Finding Child Care in Marion County is Difficult

The *Child Care Needs Survey* indicates that 61% of parents found it somewhat difficult or very difficult to find child care in Marion County. Obstacles that were experienced included lack of openings, the cost/affordability, and lack of options for those that only need part-time care. In some markets the biggest obstacle is that there simply are no providers, or so few that the family cannot get care.

**Figure 24: Difficult Finding Care**

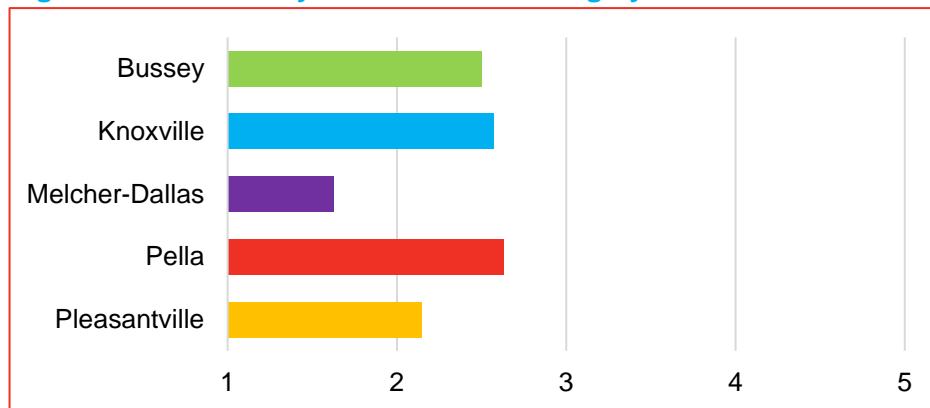


Source: "Marion County Child Care Needs Survey" by First Children's Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

If an adequate supply of child care is not available in Marion County, parents may look for care outside the area or limit the number of children they have. Twenty percent (20%) of current parents and 31% of future parents indicated the availability of child care in Marion County has impacted their decision to have/adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 adequate, and 5 highly available, parents in Marion County rate the availability of child care as less than adequate. In all 5 markets the average score is less than 3. Future parents in the Knoxville and Pella markets also rate availability less than 3, indicating they do not feel there is an adequate supply available.

**Figure 25: Availability of Child Care Rating by Parents**



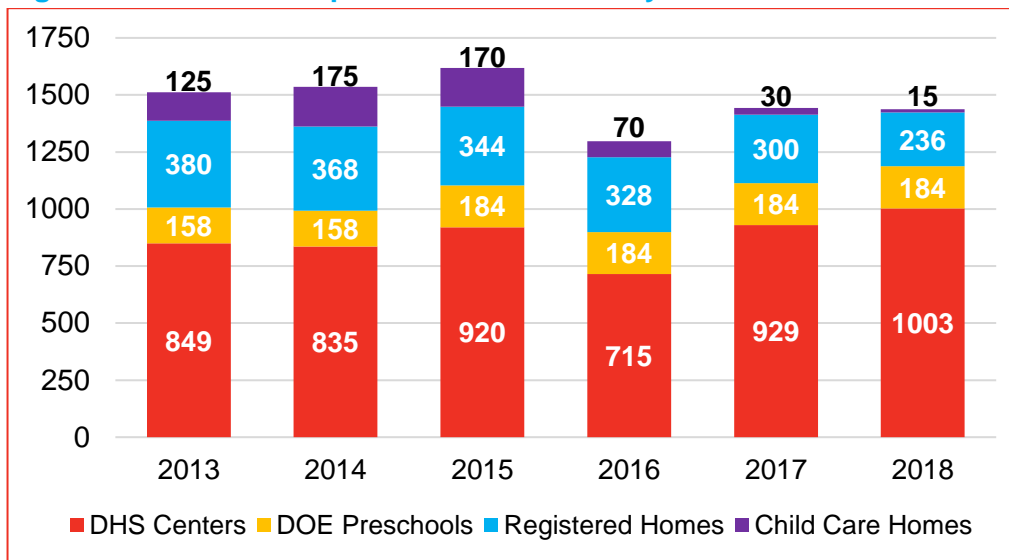
Source: “Marion County Child Care Needs Survey” by First Children’s Finance, 2018. Copyright © 2018.

### **Marion County’s Child Care Supply is Declining**

Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral indicates that over the last 5 years, the supply of child care in many Iowa communities has declined. While Marion County had a net loss of 74 child care spaces from 2013 to 2018, it is not as extreme as some areas in the state.

As of February 2019 all 5 child care markets have some DHS listed child care spaces. The largest number are in Pella (625 spaces) and Knoxville (513 spaces), however Bussey (24 spaces), Melcher-Dallas (12 spaces), and Pleasantville (51 spaces) also have some spaces. Each of the markets also has Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs (SWVPP) for four-year-olds available through their school district. The DHS listed child care spaces may not include the SWVPP spaces in some communities, as those programs are often exempt from DHS Licensing requirements because they are regulated by the Iowa Department of Education.

**Figure 26: Child Care Spaces in Marion County**



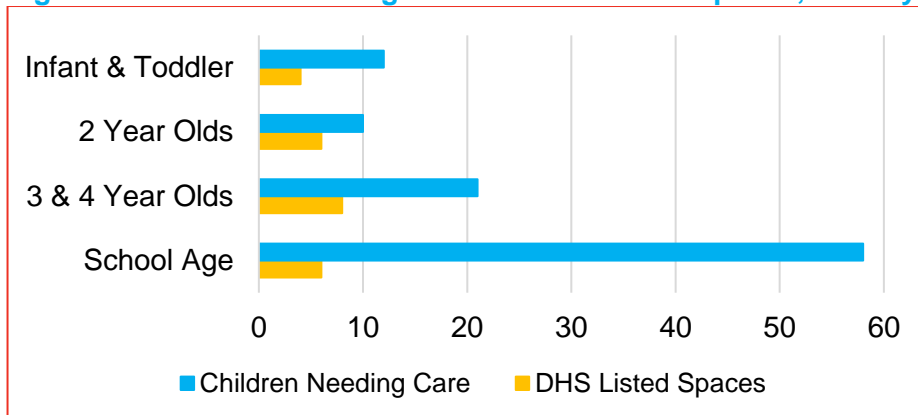
Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (2013-2018).

### Shortage of Child Care Spaces Across Marion County

There are an estimated 4,292 children ages 0 to 9 living in Marion County as of 2017. With only 1,223 spaces in DHS listed programs, we can conclude there is a shortage of child care spaces in the county. However, determining the exact shortage is not that simple. Examining the child care supply by market, and then considering family needs and preferences for child care gives a more detailed picture. The Child Care Gap Analysis in this report shows that all 5 markets have a shortage of child care.

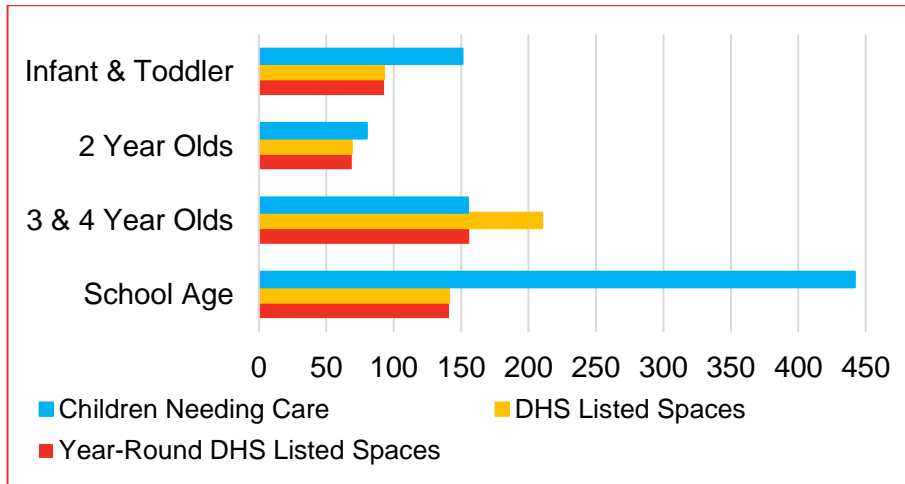
In some communities the shortage can be increased by demand from out of area families and part-time or seasonal programs. Both Knoxville and Pella as larger communities with a large employment base, are relied on by families from other communities for child care. The shortages in Knoxville and Pleasantville are also affected by part-time, school year only preschool programs.

**Figure 27: Children Needing Care vs. DHS Listed Spaces, Bussey**



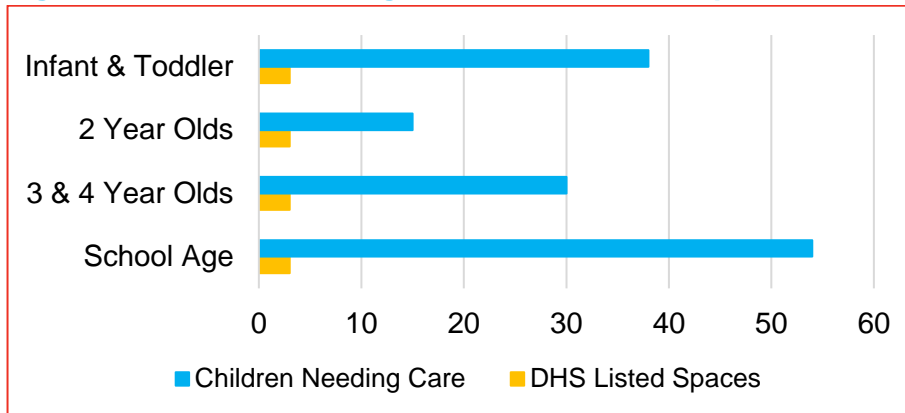
Note: Data for spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for children needing care from First Children's Finance (2018).

**Figure 28: Children Needing Care vs. DHS Listed Spaces, Knoxville**



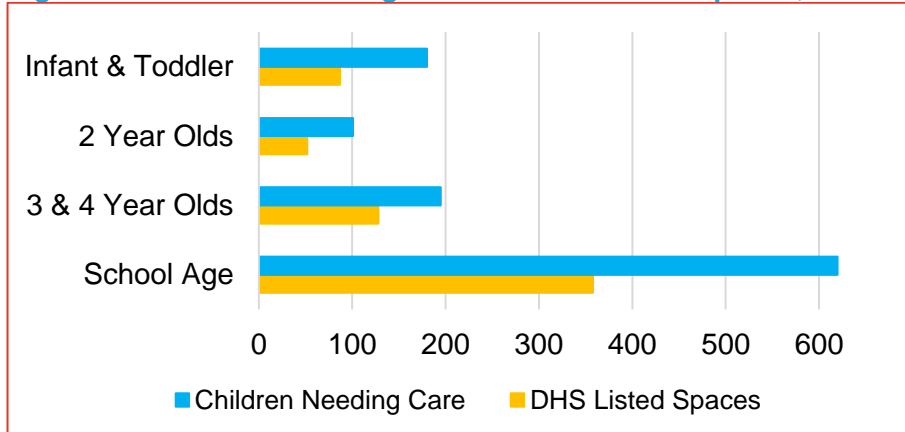
Note: Data for spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for children needing care from First Children's Finance (2018).

**Figure 29: Children Needing Care vs. DHS Listed Spaces, Melcher-Dallas**



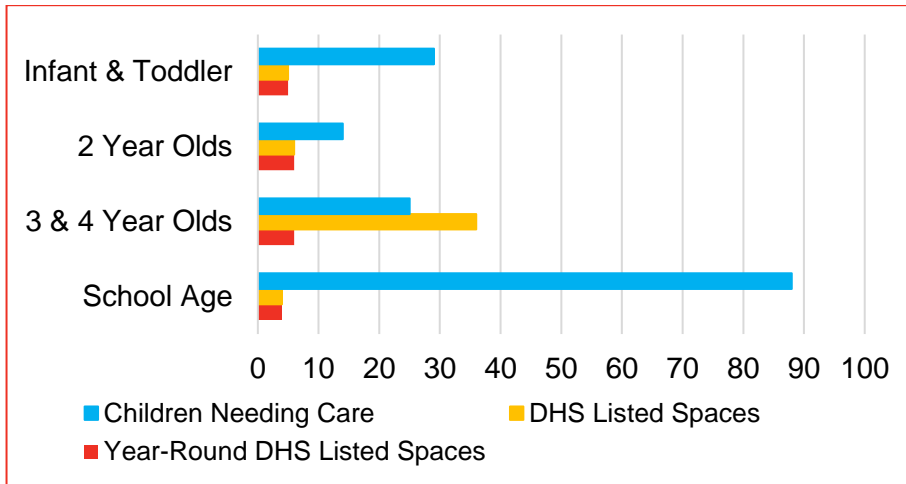
Note: Data for spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for children needing care from First Children's Finance (2018).

**Figure 30: Children Needing Care vs. DHS Listed Spaces, Pella**



Note: Data for spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for children needing care from First Children's Finance (2018).

**Figure 31: Children Needing Care vs. DHS Listed Spaces, Pleasantville**



Note: Data for spaces from Iowa Department of Human Services (2019). Data for children needing care from First Children's Finance (2018).

## The Strategic Planning Process

To develop a strategic plan for child care in Marion County, First Children's Finance focused its data collection and planning efforts on how business interventions and supports could address local challenges. In order to learn more, an inclusive process that gathered information and data from different perspectives was designed. Community members, professionals, and business leaders provided input into the process. Nine individuals served as the Child Care Steering Committee, the liaison between First Children's Finance and the community. In addition, businesses, child care professionals, community representatives and parents gave input through participating in child care needs surveys and strategic planning meetings.

In order to assure successful implementation, the Child Care Steering Committee will need to continue its role as the leader of these efforts. Business and community ownership of the plan will not only assure a relevant expansion plan, but also the support that is needed to successfully implement and carry out the plan.

### Child Care Steering Committee

A Child Care Steering Committee was formed at the start of this project. The committee's purpose is to provide insight into the community, assist with getting the child care needs survey's disseminated, and serve as the core group of participants during the strategic planning process.

Members of the Child Care Steering Committee are:

- **Carrie Baird**, Pella Corporation, Pella
- **Maria Bogaards**, PACE Alliance, Pella
- **Erica Bohm**, Pella Corporation and Board Member of Pella Early Learning Center, Pella
- **Karen Eischen**, PACE Alliance , Pella
- **Lowell Ernst**, Pella Community Schools, Pella
- **Carla Eysink**, Marion County Development Commission, Knoxville
- **Becky Iddings**, Pella Early Learning Center, Pella
- **Allison Kerndt**, Families First of Pella, Pella
- **Joe Mrstik**, City of Pleasantville, Pleasantville
- **Hanna Vander Veer**, Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, Knoxville

### Strategic Planning Participants

Throughout January and February 2019, a series of meetings focused on strategic planning were held in Knoxville and Pella. An invitation was distributed to local business, elected officials, and community representatives through Marion County Development Commission.

A total of 26 individuals participated in the meetings which resulted in the creation of a county-wide vision for child care, and child care goals and implementation projects for the individual communities that were represented. Participants in the meetings represented local child care providers, school districts, local employers, community leaders, and child care resource providers.

### Vision for Child Care

The following vision for child care in Marion County was developed through input and interactions with the Child Care Steering Committee and strategic planning participants. This vision will help guide the future of child care throughout Marion County.



- Marion County *children* will have access to programs that offer an enriching learning environment.
- Marion County *parents* will have a variety of reliable, quality, and safe child care options that meet their individual needs.
- Marion County *child care providers* will be supported and viable so they can meet the needs of families.
- Marion County *employers* will be engaged and invested in child care solutions.
- Marion County *community leaders* will advocate and provide resources for sustainable child care solutions.

To accomplish this vision means a focus on and resources committed to:

- Creating more child care spaces within regulated child care environments,
- Recruiting and developing qualified child care professionals that provide a variety of child care options,
- Developing local resources to assist parents that cannot afford child care, and
- Educating employers and the community on the value and importance of quality child care.

Every parent wants their child to be in a child care setting that not only meets their basic needs for safety and security, but also provides nurturance and prepares that child for school success. The late Jim Greenman, child care developer and advocate, stated: “A baby welcomed into a center today may spend up to twelve thousand hours in child care, more time than she will spend in all of elementary school and high school.” For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they can make as the child care environment has lasting effects on the child. Finding child care in Marion County is a challenge; options for quality child care that meets the needs and preferences of families is even more challenging.

The families and community leaders, as well as business leaders, all want the same thing – quality, affordable child care that meets the needs of families, employers, and the community as a whole – not only today, but into the future. From the beginning, the vision was to develop a solutions-based plan for expansion of quality child care, not just child care spaces.

## Child Care Goals and Implementation Projects for Marion County

The strategic planning process is an opportunity to leverage multiple view points and ideas related to addressing the child care challenges identified through market research, including the 2018 Child Care Needs Survey completed by parents, employers, and child care providers. Through a series of strategic planning meetings, participants were encouraged to develop thoughts and ideas about how to address the child care challenges in their own community.

The following goals and implementation projects have been identified through input and interactions with the Child Care Steering Committee and strategic planning participants. To achieve the expected outcomes and impacts outlined in this section, the Child Care Steering Committee members for each community will need to remain engaged and may need to lead efforts to form subcommittees that will engage additional community members and help distribute tasks.

### Bussey Market Goals

#### **GOAL: Increase the number of quality child care spaces within Bussey.**

Many parents participating in the 2018 Child Care Needs Survey indicated they prefer a “regulated” home provider. Encouraging the establishment of new home-based child care providers and the conversion of currently unregulated homes to Registered Child Development Homes will provide more opportunities for parents that prefer this choice. These efforts will focus on identifying interested individuals, providing them information on home-based child care, and providing access to resources and training.

Another opportunity to add more child care spaces is within the existing licensed child care program. Little Sabers, which is located within the elementary school in Bussey, is currently full and continues to receive requests to take more children. The owner is discussing options with the Twin Cedars School District to expand into a second classroom, which will allow Little Sabers to care for more children.

#### **Project One: Establish new Registered Child Development Homes in the Bussey area.**

##### Action Steps

April 2019 through March 2020

Develop a campaign to inform currently unregulated providers about the range of options from simply being listed with Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) to being registered with the Iowa Department of Human Resources as a Child Development Home.

Make providers aware of local training opportunities and events held by CCR&R that would be beneficial for them.

April 2020 and Beyond

Provide information to home providers and those interested in becoming a home provider on a continual basis.

##### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

By gaining more Registered Child Development Homes within the Bussey area, there will be an increase in the number of regulated child care spaces available within home settings. For each new

home provider that becomes a Registered Child Development Home category A, there will be a minimum of 5 new regulated spaces.

## **Project Two: Expand the existing licensed child care center, Little Sabers.**

### Action Steps

April 2019 through September 2019

Little Sabers owner and the Twin Cedars School District will come to an agreement on the use of an additional classroom by Little Sabers. The new room will be used for children ages 4 through 12, allowing the center to separate the children by age. The DHS licensed capacity of the new room is expected to be 17.

October 2019 through March 2020

Establish an annual fundraiser for Little Sabers that over time will become a “signature” event. Establishing a fundraiser that the community looks forward to and supports will make these efforts easier for the center’s owner and help keep the community engaged in local child care.

April 2020 through March 2021

Options for additional expansion will continue to be sought out. The owner of Little Sabers will talk with local churches to identify additional spaces where licensed child care can be offered within Bussey. These additional spaces could be used by Little Sabers, or possibly by another provider in the community that would be responsible to obtain their own Iowa Department of Human Services license.

Little Sabers’ annual fundraising efforts will continue.

### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

By Little Sabers adding a second classroom, the number of child care spaces in Bussey will be increased. This expansion is already underway and pending fire marshal and DHS licensing approval, 17 more children will have access to quality child care in Bussey. Increasing the number of child care spaces within the community will also give parents flexibility as more child care options are available.

This expansion along with fundraising efforts of Little Sabers, will make the community more aware of the child care needs of families in Bussey, and how they can support local child care providers.

## **Knoxville Market Goals**

**GOAL: Share and Develop resources that will provide access to quality child care for Knoxville families.**

The *Child Care Needs Survey* asked parents why their children are not currently in their preferred type of child care, the top answer among Knoxville parents was that they are not able to afford it. Families with a household income that is equal to or above 145% of poverty (the cutoff to qualify for Iowa Child Care Assistance), but below 200% of poverty (the point at which self-sufficiency is supposed to be attainable) are those that tend to struggle the most with paying for child care.

According to US Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2019, the “affordability gap” (families between 145% and 200% of poverty) would include a family of 3 with an annual household income between \$30,928 and \$42,660; or a family of 4 with an annual household income between \$37,337 and \$51,500. Based

on the average family size in the Knoxville market of 2.93, it is assumed a majority of the families with children would consist of 3 or 4 members.

**Project One: Explore ways the Knoxville Chamber and its members can support families who need child care.**

Action Steps

April 2019 through September 2019

The Chamber will inventory the child care options in the area, specifically those that are not listed with Iowa DHS. Known providers within the community will be asked to help identify other providers. The provider's contact information along with basic program information will be confirmed by the Chamber annually, and updated as needed.

October 2019 through March 2020

The Chamber, with the support of local child care providers, will determine what information is most useful for parents that are seeking child care, especially those that may be new to or relocating to the area. Resources for information or ideas will include Iowa Department of Human Services (including information on the Child Care Assistance Program) and Child Care Resource & Referral.

After completing the inventory of child care providers, the Chamber will establish a new webpage with child care information for parents. In addition, a printed and/or PDF document containing the same information will be shared with local partners that often have direct interaction with families, such as The Well, the school district, and local churches.

April 2020 and Beyond

To make child care more accessible for families that make too much to qualify for Iowa DHS Child Care Assistance, but still struggle to pay for care, a local child care scholarship fund will be explored. This process will include:

- Identifying a fiscal agent and program administrator.
- Determining if funds would be award directly to parents, or to child care providers, establishing appropriate eligibility guidelines, selection criteria, and a process for applications.
- Developing a plan for seeding and sustaining the funding pool.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

A local website will help parents quickly find information about child care. Having information and resources available on the Chamber website, will make it easily accessible to families that are new to or considering relocating to Knoxville. To measure the impact, the Chamber will use website analytics to determine how many parents access the information.

A scholarship fund will allow more families to access the type of child care they desire but cannot afford. Using the US Census family income ranges that most closely align with the 2019 US Federal Poverty Guideline income ranges for a family of 3 and a family of 4, it can be determined there are approximately 450 families (of all sizes) with annual household incomes between \$35,000 and \$49,999 in the Knoxville market area. This range would put a family of 3 or 4, above the threshold for

qualifying for CCA but below what is considered a level to be self-sufficient. These are the families that would benefit from such a scholarship fund.

**Project Two: Provide resources and educational opportunities related to child care to local employers, to be shared with their workforce.**

Action Steps

April 2019 through September 2019

The Chamber will hold discussions with local employers/Chamber Members to learn more about what child care related benefits they are offering. During these discussions, individuals that are willing to share their expertise with other employers will be identified.

October 2019 through March 2020

The Chamber will encourage employers to provide information to employees about local child care options. Providing information within orientation or hiring materials, and within employee handbooks will be the first step. After the Chamber adds child care information to their website, employers will be asked to include the link within these employee materials.

Provide a session for local employers, coordinated by the Chamber, to share information on how they can support their employees in regards to child care. The Human Resources staff from larger employers will be asked to help present information and serve as a resource for smaller employers. Some topics that could be included are:

- Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts (FSA), allowing employees to set aside their own pre-tax wages to help pay for child care.
- Options for employers to directly supplement child care costs for their employees, including paying all or a portion of the tuition directly to the provider, or directly reimbursing an employee for child care expenses.
- Employer funded scholarships for their own workers through either the employer, a specific provider, or a local fiscal agent.
- Employer partnerships with local child care programs to have reserved spaces and/or enrollment priority.
- Allowing schedule flexibility or work from home options (for appropriate positions), when an employee's child care arrangement is temporarily not available, such as a child not being allowed to attend due to sickness or the provider being on vacation.

April 2020 and Beyond

Repeat the employer informational sessions annually, or as needed.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

The Chamber is a natural fit for being a leader in convening employers and coordinating educational opportunities. These opportunities will be an additional benefit for Chamber members, especially smaller businesses that normally do not have Human Resources expertise on staff. Topics that are current and relevant, such as workforce and child care, will keep more Chamber members engaged in the opportunities. As employers increase their understanding of options to support their employees, more employers will offer or expand their offerings related to child care benefits, resulting in more parents with access to child care-related benefits and information.

### **Project Three: Engage local child care providers with the Chamber and the community.**

#### Action Steps

April 2019 through September 2019

The Chamber will host two meetings for local child care providers, both in the first year of implementing this plan. Chamber staff will help with setting a date, finding a meeting location, and facilitating discussion as needed. The first meeting will provide an opportunity for providers to meet each other, learn about this *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan for Child Care*, and begin building relationships with each other. The second meeting will be the point at which the providers decide if they would like to continue meeting, and identify a coordinator, other than the Chamber, to take over scheduling and coordinating meetings.

Make child care the topic at a Chamber Lunch and Learn or other meeting at least once every two years. Invite a local provider to talk about their program, the child care industry, changes they have recently experienced or are facing in regards to regulations or legislation, and challenges they are anticipating in the future. The information shared could include an annual update on the child care industry or a particular provider. Chamber staff may also update members and the community on the progress of the goals and projects from this plan, and share ways employers and the community can get involved.

The Chamber will incorporate discussions about 'shared services' into the child care providers meetings and/or their own membership meetings. If an opportunity for shared services between a local child care provider and a local business arises, the Chamber will be supportive of that opportunity and make referrals as necessary.

October 2019 through March 2020

The Chamber will host the second meeting for local child care providers.

April 2020 and Beyond

The Chamber will continue to include child care as a topic for Lunch and Learn or another meeting at least once every two years.

#### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

Within the first year, there will be two opportunities for child care providers to establish a peer network. This network will promote collaboration among providers, including shared services and peer-to-peer referrals for care. It can be beneficial for any small business, especially those with a low profit margin like child care, to find ways to share services and reduce costs. There may be opportunities within professional services (such as payroll processing), back-office functions (such as filing DHS child care assistance or USDA food program paperwork), or simply purchasing in bulk. With 1 licensed center and 11 registered homes in Knoxville, attendance by approximately 5 providers is expected at events for the first year. An invitation may also be extended to all providers county-wide.

Incorporating child care as a topic for Chamber Lunch and Learn or other meetings, will lead to a more informed membership and stronger community. A greater understanding can lead to more support for child care providers, new opportunities for partnerships, and even shared services between child care providers and other local businesses.

## **Pella Market Goals**

### **GOAL: Increase the number of quality child care spaces in Pella.**

Parents that participated in the *Child Care Needs Survey* indicated that (outside of themselves or another family member) their number one choice for child care setting is a DHS licensed child care center, followed by a “regulated” child care home. Pella is a growing community that is already facing a child care shortage, and with continued growth in the future, there is a great need to create more child care spaces within a variety of settings.

### **Project One: Support the expansion efforts of new and existing child care centers.**

#### Action Steps

April 2019 through July 2019

The Child Care Steering Committee and PACE Alliance will stay aware of the progress of any expansion efforts by child care centers, and be prepared to connect these providers to the resources or supports they may need.

The Child Care Steering Committee will make this final report available to providers and agencies through Marion County Development Commission and PACE Alliance, both of which will post it on their website. Making the report available will allow child care providers and those interested in becoming a provider to understand the supply and demand for child care within Marion County, giving them data on which to base their decisions.

PACE Alliance and the Child Care Steering Committee will identify a core group to lead the efforts of investigating a new child care center in Pella. Potential group members include community leaders, employers, school district, colleges, and existing child care providers. The focus of the group will be to consider possible partnerships, locations, services to be provided, and to begin developing the best model for meeting the community's needs.

August 2019 through March 2020

After the core group is formed and some preliminary plans are developed, the core group will engage additional employers and community leaders to build support for a new center. Support could include financial contributions for start-up and/or operations, providing a temporary location to provide care in the interim, and other efforts such as helping plan and execute fundraising. Additional opportunities such as partnering with Central College, DMACC, and the school district for work-study and internships will also be explored during this phase.

April 2020 and Beyond

Execute the fundraising plan to secure the start-up and initial operating costs. Once a portion of the funds are secured, construction or remodeling will begin.

#### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

At the time this plan is being written, the Child Care Steering Committee is aware of one existing child care center that has plans to expand. De Kinderen Huis will begin remodeling in April 2019 to add 5 classrooms.

At the end of the first year, there will be a plan in place for a new child care center. The plan will include who will own and operate the center, cost estimates for building or remodeling, an operational

or business plan, and a fundraising plan to get the center up and going. Depending on the total cost and the ability of the community to raise the necessary funds, a new center could be built and operational in approximately two to three years.

While the exact number of children and families impacted will not be known until a center is designed, a conservative estimate can be made. A center that has a licensed capacity based on having the equivalent of two staff per age group (infant, toddler, two-year-olds, three-year-olds, four-year-olds, and school age), would be licensed for 98. If staffing were increased to three staff per age group, the center capacity would increase to 147.

## **Project Two: Recruit and retain in-home child care providers.**

### Action Steps

April 2019 through March 2020

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) will participate in a local *Week of the Young Child* event in April 2019. At the event, staff will identify individuals that are interested in becoming child care providers, as well as those that are already providing care but are unregulated.

Information provided to these individuals will include the options for being a DHS Registered Child Development home versus not being registered, and the benefits, including additional funding that may be available for those that are registered.

April 2020 and Beyond

CCR&R will continue hosting or participating in events to distribute information to individuals interested in becoming a child care provider annually, or as needed.

### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

The outcome of this project will be additional child care spaces in Registered Child Development Homes. Additional regulated spaces will increase the supply of child care, making it easier for parents, especially those that are relocating to Pella to find care. Having access to Registered Child Development Homes will give parents peace of mind that the provider they have chosen is regulated.

For each additional Registered Child Development Home category A provider that begins providing child care, the impact will be 5 new child care spaces. New spaces could also be created if an already Registered Child Development Home moves to a different category, therefore increasing their capacity. For each existing category A home that becomes a category B (maximum capacity 12), the impact will be 7 new child care spaces; and for each category B that becomes a category C2 (maximum capacity 16) the impact will be 4 new child care spaces.

## **GOAL: Increase the child care center labor pool in Pella through local training and partnerships.**

According to the *Child Care Needs Survey*, the most important factor for parents when selecting child care was the staff (dependable provider/staff and positive interactions between staff and children). Yet, one of the challenges facing many child care centers across Iowa, is finding and retaining qualified child care staff.



**Project One: Explore options for offering the required training and work experience needed to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ locally.**

The Council for Professional Recognition Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ is a professional development opportunity for early educators working with children ages birth to 5 years old to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities in the early childhood education field. The CDA credentialing program assesses Candidates using multiple sources evidence, including an exam, observation and professional portfolio with resources and competency statements prepared by the Candidate.

To be eligible to apply for the credential, candidates must be at least a junior in high school, complete 120 clock hours of training, 480 hours of professional work experience (paid or volunteer, within the 3 years prior to application), and prepare a professional portfolio (within the 6 months prior to application).

Action Steps

April 2019 through March 2020

Pella Community Schools will explore options for offering access to early childhood education courses, that cover the growth and development of children ages birth to 5 years. Assuming the school moves forward, they will partner with local child care centers to promote job opportunities for students in the program that would provide the necessary professional work experience needed to obtain their CDA credential.

April 2020 and Beyond

Staff at the high school will identify students that may excel at early care and education careers, and encourage them to consider obtaining their CDA credential.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

Providing access to the required training will allow students to jump start their career in early care and education. Beginning work toward this credential before graduating from high school could also provide students with financial benefits. Having some coursework completed and to already be working within a licensed child care center could make the student eligible for the T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Help) scholarship program or WAGE\$ salary supplement program, both administered through the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children, and available to the staff employed at child care centers in Marion County.

**GOAL: Make resources available for families that do not qualify for Child Care Assistance (CCA), but still struggle to pay for child care.**

The *Child Care Needs Survey* asked parents why their children are not currently in their preferred type of child care, the top answer was that they are not able to afford it. Families with a household income that is equal to or above 145% of poverty (the cutoff to qualify for Iowa Child Care Assistance), but below 200% of poverty (the point at which self-sufficiency is supposed to be attainable) are those that tend to struggle the most with paying for child care.

According to US Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2019, the “affordability gap” (families between 145% and 200% of poverty) would include a family of 3 with an annual household income between \$30,928 and \$42,660; or a family of 4 with an annual household income between \$37,337 and \$51,500. Based

on the average family size in the Pella market of 3.01, it is assumed a majority of the families with children would consist of 3 or 4 members.

### **Project One: Provide resources and information to local employers on child care related benefits.**

#### Action Steps

April 2019 through March 2020

Provide a session for local employers, coordinated by Marion County Employers Council, to share information on how businesses can support their employees in regards to child care. The Human Resources staff from larger employers will help present information and serve as a resource for smaller employers. Some topics that could be included are:

- Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts (FSA), allowing employees to set aside their own pre-tax wages to help pay for child care.
- Options for employers to directly supplement child care costs for their employees, including paying all or a portion of the tuition directly to the provider, or directly reimbursing an employee for child care expenses.
- Employer funded scholarships for their own workers through either the employer, a specific provider, or a local fiscal agent.
- Employer partnerships with local child care programs to have reserved spaces and/or enrollment priority.
- Allowing schedule flexibility or work from home options (for appropriate positions), when an employee's child care arrangement is temporarily not available, such as a child not being allowed to attend due to sickness or the provider being on vacation.

April 2020 and Beyond

Continue offering information to employers on a periodic basis to keep them up to date on options.

#### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

Engaging employers in the child care conversation will result in increased supports for employees as well as local child care providers. If any employers incorporate child care benefits or child care information into their materials, employees that are parents will feel supported and may find child care more accessible.

### **Project Two: Explore establishing an income-based child care tuition scholarship fund.**

#### Action Steps

April 2019 through March 2020

To help make child care more accessible for families that make too much money to qualify for Iowa DHS Child Care Assistance, but that still struggle to pay for the care they desire, a local child care scholarship fund will be explored. Exploration will include:

- Identifying a fiscal agent and program administrator.
- Determining if funds would be award directly to parents, or to child care providers, establishing appropriate eligibility guidelines, selection criteria, and a process for applications.
- Developing a plan for seeding and sustaining the funding pool.

#### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

A scholarship fund will allow more families to access the type of child care they desire but cannot afford. Using the US Census family income ranges that most closely align with the 2019 US Federal Poverty Guideline income ranges for a family of 3 and a family of 4, it can be determined there are approximately 633 families (of all sizes) with annual household incomes between \$35,000 and \$49,999 in the Pella market area. This range would put a family of 3 or 4, above the threshold for qualifying for CCA but below what is considered a level to be self-sufficient. These are the families that would benefit from such a scholarship fund.

## **Pleasantville Market Goals**

**GOAL: Use this *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan* to inform community leaders of Pleasantville's child care needs.**

Parents that participated in the *Child Care Needs Survey* indicated that (outside of themselves or another family member) their number one choice for child care setting is a DHS licensed child care center, followed by a "regulated" child care home. Pleasantville has a limited number of full-time, year-round child care spaces available to meet parent preferences. In addition, the community is planning for future growth through the development of single-family housing units, which has the potential to increase the demand for child care.

## **Project One: Hold community-based conversations related to the expansion of child care in Pleasantville.**

### Action Steps

April 2019 through July 2019

The Child Care Steering Committee will make this final report available to all communities throughout Marion County. The report will provide community leaders, child care providers, and those interested in becoming a provider data on which to base future decisions related to expanding child care.

August 2019 through March 2020

Pleasantville representatives from the Child Care Steering Committee will identify individuals to coordinate a meeting of community leaders, business owners, the school district, and child care providers to review and discuss the results of this study and determine the best next steps for the community.

### Expected Outcomes and Impacts

At the end of the first year there will have been at least one meeting to determine what, if any, next steps the community will take to address the child care gap in Pleasantville.