



## FIRST CHILDREN'S FINANCE

Building stronger child care businesses

### **Child Care Needs Survey, Parent Survey Summary Marion County, Iowa**

Prepared by First Children's Finance  
March 2019

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## Introduction

In 2018, First Children's Finance was commissioned by Marion County Development Commission to conduct a *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan* for Marion County. The purpose of the 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.

The following pages are an excerpt from the full *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan* for Marion County report which was completed in March 2019. For a copy of the full report, contact Carla Eyesink, Executive Director of Marion County Development Commission, [Carla@RedRockArea.com](mailto:Carla@RedRockArea.com).

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).

## 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.

### 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 but they 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 an average of 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 an overall average of 3.23.

**Table 1: 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.

Current parents from outside Marion County 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) 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.*

Responses from individuals indicating they live outside the county were not included in the following data points, unless otherwise noted.

The majority of both current and future parents are married or living with a partner, making them a “family” household, according to US Census Bureau definition.

**Table 2: 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 3: 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 the 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 4: 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>1</sup>	1	1	50	62	4	4
5 to 12 Yr Old <sup>2</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 5: 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>1</sup> Includes children age 5 that have not started Kindergarten.

<sup>2</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 6: 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 complete 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. Similar industries are seen among future parents.

**Table 7: 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 8: 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. Among future parents, 7 responded yes that they think 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 hours (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.*

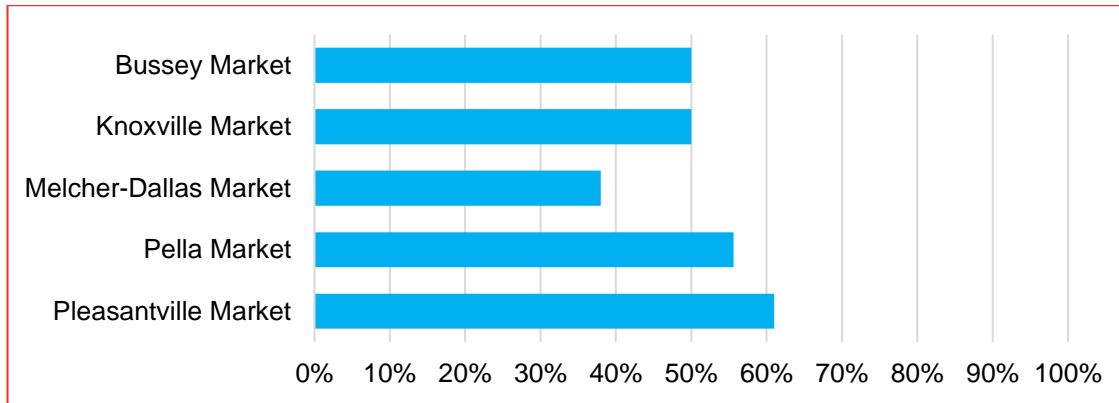
- *...currently I bring her to work and hope we can stay occupied so I can work a bit more.*
- *Grandma watches our children...the anxiety of leaving her there makes me not work as late and not always get everything done that should be. I would love to send her to a center but we are scared that it may 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 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" (someone other than themselves or another family member) child care 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 1: Respondents Currently Using Paid Child Care<sup>3</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, parents are making the decision to either have one parent be a stay-at-home parent or they are adjusting their work schedules so that paid child care is not needed. Other reasons include family members watching the children and not being able to find an appropriate option.

**Table 9: 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>3</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 10: Problems Experience in Last 12 Months due to Child Care Challenges**

	<b>Melcher-</b>				
	<b>Bussey</b>	<b>Knoxville</b>	<b>Dallas</b>	<b>Pella</b>	<b>Pleasantville</b>
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 that there are changes that could help them. Frequently named changes were longer 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 in 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 their [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.*

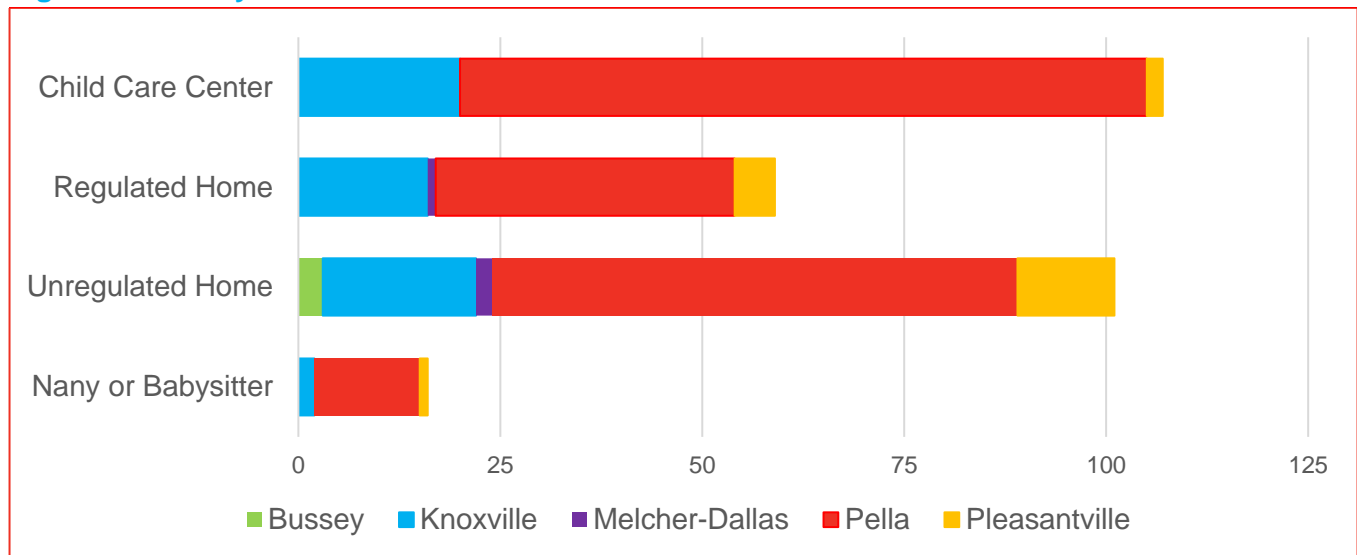
#### Pleasantville Parents

- *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 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 child care centers and regulated homes.

**Figure 2: Primary Care Used in the Last 12 Months**



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

**Table 11: 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 12: 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 to be the primary care giver, while in Pella it is a regulated home provider and then a parent.

**Table 13: 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 reasons children are not in the type of care parents most prefer are families not able to afford their preferred type of care, or the preferred setting not accepting enrollments.

**Table 14: 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	1	1	9	4
Other	2	0	0	5	1
Location too far away	1	0	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 with 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 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 with the school district where the child will attend.

**Table 15: Location of Child Care**

	Bussey		Knoxville		Melcher-Dallas	
	<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

	Pella		Pleasantville		Future Parents	
	<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 16: Preferred Vicinity of Current Parents**

	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	Dallas	Pella	Pleasantville
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 17: Preferred Vicinity of Future Parents**

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

**Table 18: 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 average amount of child care paid per week varies by market and by age group. For infant care, most parents average \$150 or more per week. For toddler care, most are again paying \$150 or more on average. Average weekly tuition for children ages three- to five-year-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 on average.

**Table 19: 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 20: 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 21: Average Weekly Three- to Five-Year-Old Tuition paid by Current Parents**

Three- to Five-Year-Old (Not in Kindergarten)	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	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 22: Average Weekly Before and After School Tuition paid by Current Parents**

School Age (Before/After School)	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	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 23: Average Weekly Summer Care Tuition paid by Current Parents**

School Age (Summer Care)	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	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 24: Average Weekly Fees Paid Per Child for Preschool**

	Melcher-				
	Bussey	Knoxville	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.

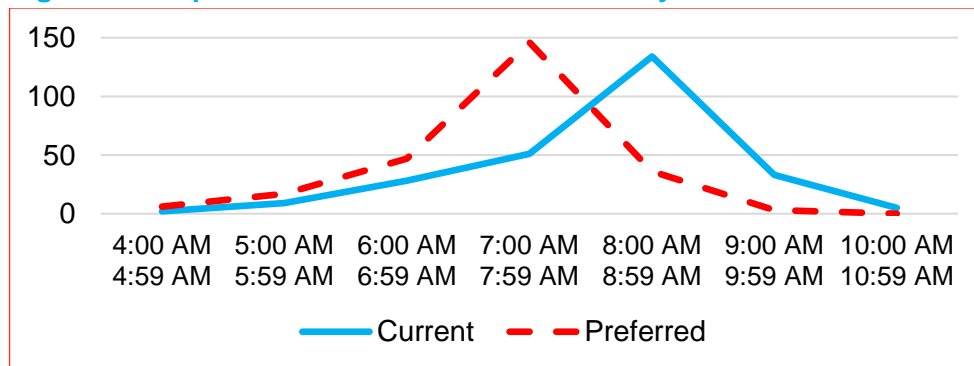
Most parents' needs in regards to time are met within the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., there are a few that are currently using earlier or later times, and even more that would prefer to. Currently there are 11 parents using child care before 6:00 a.m. and 3 that use care after 6:00 p.m. When asked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

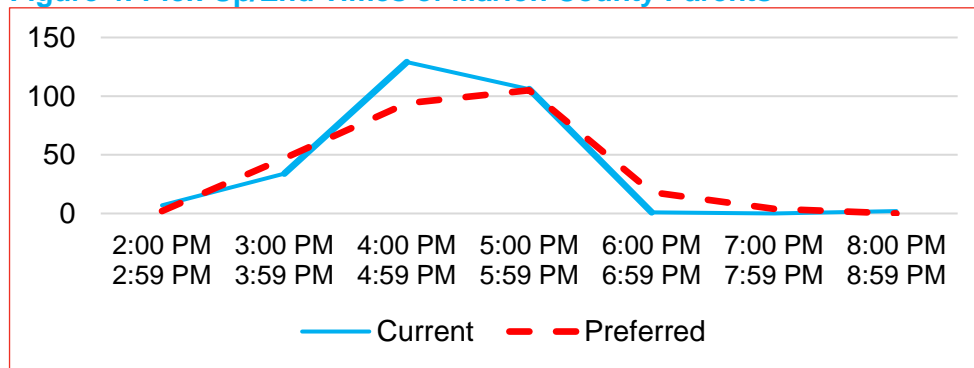
In Bussey, Knoxville, and Pella, the most popular time for pick-up is 4:00- 4:59 p.m. The Knoxville and Pella markets' second most popular time for pick-up is 5:00- 5:59 p.m., with almost as many families. In Melcher-Dallas the most popular pick-up time is 3:00-3:59 p.m., and in Pleasantville 5:00-5:59 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 3: Drop-off/Start Times of Marion County Parents**



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

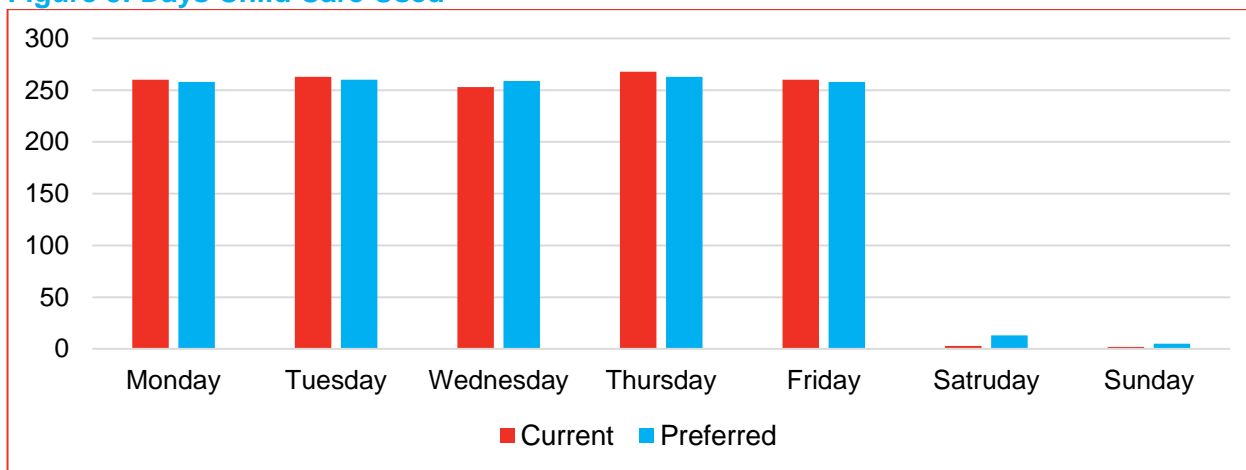
**Figure 4: Pick-Up/End Times of Marion County Parents**



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

Days 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.

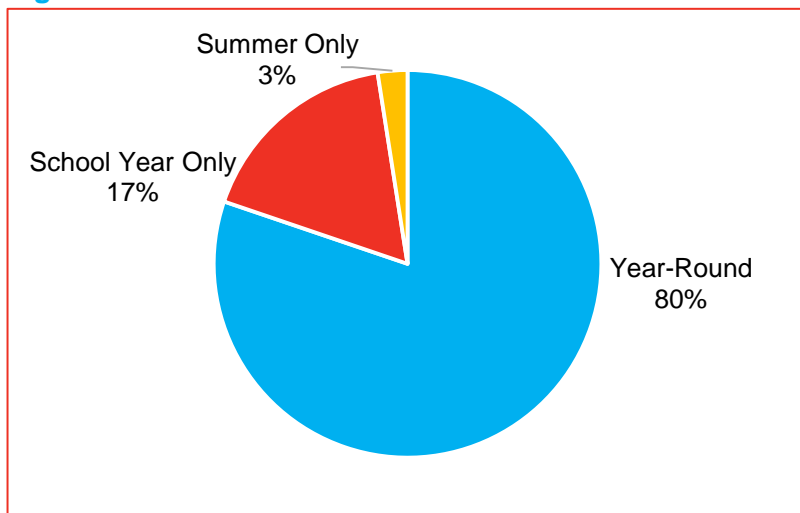
**Figure 5: Days Child Care Used**



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 has a similar environment 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 Pleasantville has 95% 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.

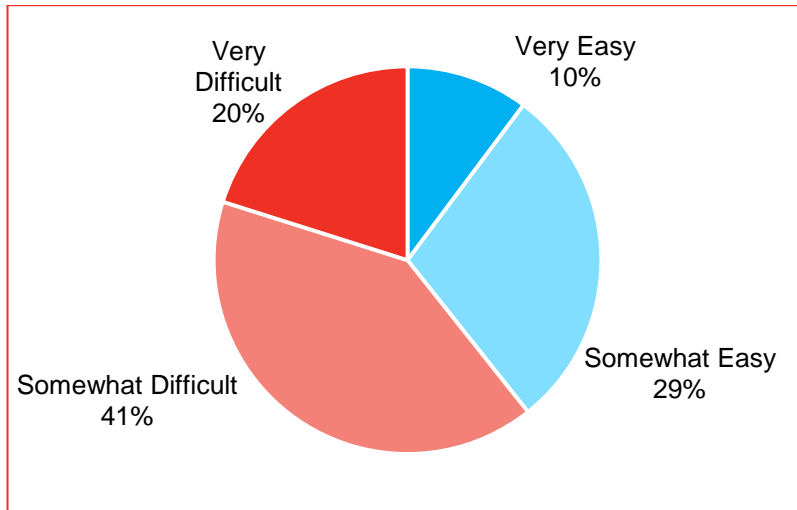
**Figure 6: Time of Year Families Prefer Child Care**



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 7: 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 back up 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 Pleasantville 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:

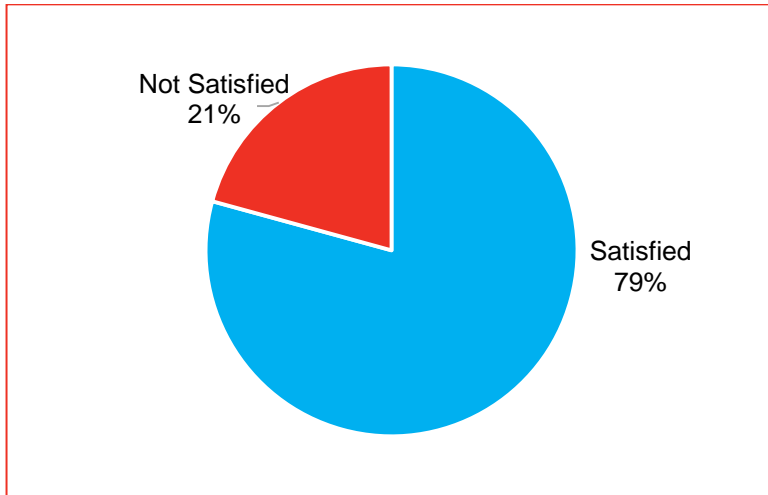
- *No local daycare CENTERS in our community. In-home providers are often full and are not open long enough for my particular workday needs. I work from 8-4:30 pm in Des Moines but cannot be home by 5 or even 5:30 most evenings.*
- *There are limited providers available in my area that open at 6 am to 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 8: 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 based 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 it's 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 back up 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 one factor for parents was dependable provider/staff, while 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 25: Single Most Important Factor 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 26: Other Important Factor 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 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 given the same list and asked to select all other factors that are important to them. In Knoxville there was a tie for the most popular additional factor with positive interactions between staff and children, and upkeep/appearance of the facility and playground each being selected by 5 of the 6 parents. In Pella, positive interactions between staff and children was selected by 23 of the 30 respondents, and tuition rates or price was selected by 22 of 30 respondents.

**Table 27: Single Most Important Factor 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 had no

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

**Table 28: 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 hour 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 ad 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 29: 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 30: 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 became 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 that 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 through 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 ratings were below 3.

**Table 31: 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 opening 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 space 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. I 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 32: Quality of Child Care in Marion County**

	<b>Current Parents</b>	<b>Future Parents</b>
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... 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 and 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 daycares 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 serve 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.*