



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES

Office for Children & Families

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Kelli Goetz, Division Director
Shelly Toms, Director

News Release

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CONTACT: [Shelly Toms](#)

Department Director

301-600-1447

Child Care for Young Children is Essential for Families to Work

Study Finds 80% of Families Need Child Care for Work

Frederick, Md. – Work, job search or school, is the reason that 80% of families are choosing child care for their children who are too young for kindergarten, according to preliminary findings from the Frederick County Child Care Market Study led by the Frederick County Office for Children and Families. Community members and families attended a Community Information and Input session on November 15th to learn more about the study and to provide input about their experiences and ideas for potential solutions.

The study shows Frederick County families pay for child care in time, money, and stress. Thirty-eight percent say that child care adds 30 minutes or more to their daily commute. Forty-six percent of Frederick County families spend \$300 or more on child care every week. Fifty-two percent of families report the cost of child care being very or extremely stressful—with 82% receiving no financial assistance. This is according to a survey completed by 1,300 Frederick County families in May 2023, which was conducted by the study's contractor, Public Policy Associates and Solomon Evaluation.

“It’s no surprise that child care is expensive. But it’s not the only cost. Families also pay for child care in time and stress. Child care providers may not be located where families need them and the expense is a huge stressor that the majority of families bear alone,” said Shelly Toms, director of the Office for Children and Families.

Furthermore, all children showed big differences in readiness for kindergarten if they had participated in formal child care -- licensed to meet staffing and quality requirements -- according to a preliminary analysis from the study. The biggest increase in readiness was for English Learners and Hispanic children, who participated in formal care prior to kindergarten.

The study will identify child care provider and family needs and inform the Office for Children and Families on ways the County can look at innovative strategies to improve child care access and the child care system. The study is funded by an American Rescue Plan Act grant. For more information about the project and information on the Community Information and Input Session scheduled for December 6 for employers and businesses, contact the Office for Children and Families or see visit www.publicpolicy.com/FrederickCoStudy.

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