



Child Care in Missoula

2020 Survey Results



Engaging Business and Community

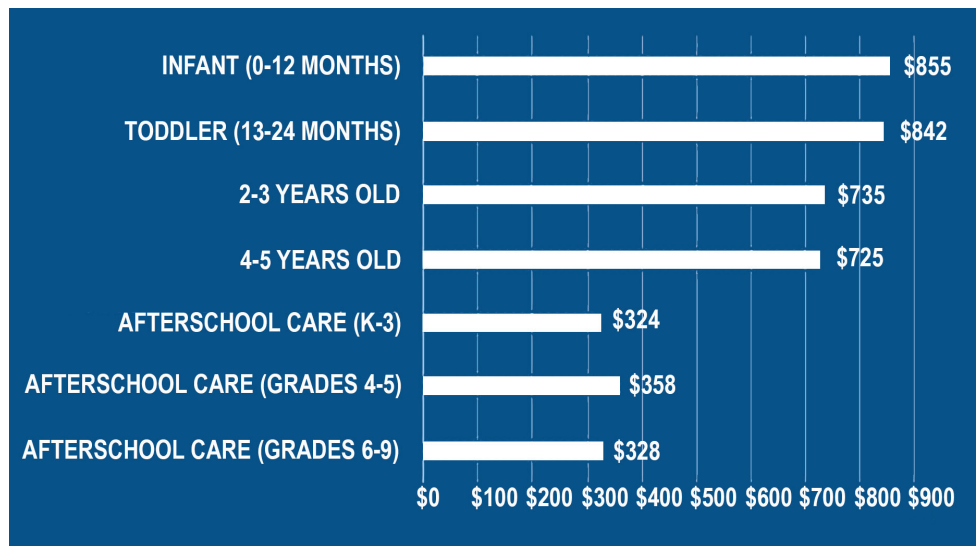
In 2018, the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce identified child care as a critical workforce issue. Two years later, that issue continues to be a challenge for the community. The need for increased access to affordable, quality child care has been complicated by new challenges arising from Covid-19 and the related impacts it has had on schools and the business community.

According to a recent statewide survey by the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research, inadequate child care costs Montana businesses \$55 million per year. That survey also indicated that improving access to child care could save Montana's economy \$232 million per year. These statistics show the importance of addressing this workforce issue both for Missoula and for the state.

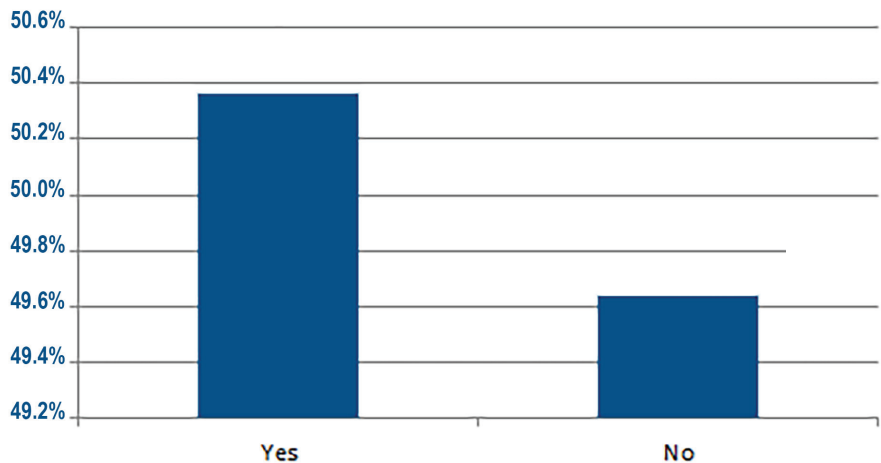
The Chamber conducted its second Child Care Needs Assessment Survey during the months of July and August of 2020. The survey revealed new concerns and challenges due to uncertainty in the community caused by to Covid-19.

In the Chamber's 2018 survey,

AVERAGE COST, BY AGE, PER MONTH, PER CHILD FOR CHILD CARE



HAVE YOU SCALED BACK OR ABANDONED YOUR CAREER DUE TO CHILD CARE ISSUES?





Child Care in Missoula 2020

cost was identified as one of the biggest hurdles for parents accessing child care in Missoula. Two years later, cost remains a significant challenge. Survey responses indicate the price of full-time child care has seen a small increase and remains one of the highest expenses in a family’s monthly budget. For families with multiple children, the costs of child care can be prohibitive and be a cause of one parent exiting the workforce.

In the Chamber’s 2020 survey, we found the percentage of respondents who claim to have scaled back or abandoned their career due to child care issues rose 3% over 2018’s survey – increasing from 47% to 50%.

The BBER survey adds additional details about the impacts a lack of child care can have on parents’ careers. The survey found working parents had, due to a lack of adequate child care, declined training, turned down job offers, changed from full-

time to part-time work, quit their job or been demoted or terminated from their job.

The global Covid-19 pandemic has created new challenges for working parents looking for child care. The 2020 survey indicates an increased demand for care of school-aged children. Public schools returning with a hybrid schedule (Some in-class learning paired with some remote-learning) has created additional need for child care.

Additionally, the global pandemic caused the closure of some child care operations. While most of those closures were temporary as providers worked to establish new protocols for providing care during a pandemic, some respondents indicated their provider had closed their doors permanently, leaving them with no options for their child.

Cost, availability and health concerns were the top three reasons 2020 survey respondents indicated for choosing not to utilize child care

in Missoula. Many indicated that the economics of care for multiple children made it impossible for them to return to the workforce.

The Chamber’s survey found many of the child care issues facing Missoula parents mirror the results found in BBER’s statewide survey – indicating Missoula is not unique in facing challenges related to child care.

BBER’s survey found inadequate child care has led parents to leave work early or miss an entire day or more of work to deal with child care issues. Additionally, parents find securing affordable child care challenging. The Chamber’s survey of Missoula working parents finds the same results. Child care issues impact the workforce and cost the local economy in productivity losses.

The Chamber will continue to work with its partners to address the needs of this survey to create better access to affordable, quality child care.

CHILD CARE CHALLENGES

