
Oregon Subsidy Policy Impact Research Project

Parent Survey

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Executive Summary

The Subsidy Policy Impact (SPI) Research Project includes three studies that use a combination of methods in order to increase understanding of how child care subsidies affect parental child care and employment decisions. The qualitative study, the first of the SPI Project's three studies, informed the design of the telephone survey study whose findings are reported in this paper. The telephone survey of 580 parents enabled us to empirically evaluate the patterns that emerge as important to child care subsidy parents from the qualitative study as well as address policy questions that prior research using administrative data could not address. The most unexpected finding from the qualitative study was the reported experience of unpredictability in parents' child care costs. Along with an examination of unpredictable costs, we explored more broadly parents' employment and child care arrangements in order to increase understanding of the decisions they make and the role that child care subsidy policy plays in those decisions. The significant findings and policy implications of the study are:

- Parents perceive that the subsidy program enables them to be employed, and that without it they cannot make employment work. In December 2009 all survey respondents were employed, going to school, or in training. By the time of the survey in May 2010, 15% were unemployed (not working, going to school, or in training). This confirms the qualitative study finding of frequent job changes. Access to a subsidy when the parent secures the next job appears critical to sustained employment. **Reservation list policies and practices will affect the extent to which access to subsidy supports employment stability for parents experiencing job changes.**
- Almost two-thirds of parents who exit the subsidy program do so for employment eligibility reasons such as job loss or short-term leave. Provider changes precipitate exits for about 11% of leavers and slightly more (15%) leave because of increased income. **A change in eligibility rules that would allow parents whose earnings are increasing to reach 250% FPL would support their employment and stabilize their children's care.**
- Almost two-thirds of subsidy parents say that without a subsidy they could not work or do not know what they would do. Amongst the parents who exit the program, only a third are employed, many having lost the subsidy due to job loss. A little less than a quarter are in school, job training, or both. The remaining 43% are doing none of the above. It appears that the link between subsidy receipt and employment is a major contributor to short subsidy spells. Policy changes that would appear to increase continuity of subsidy use and thus child care arrangements include taking schooling and job search into account. **Making student parents enrolled in educational institutions eligible for subsidies would enable parents to complete their education and thus increase employment options. This seems especially important for parents seeking a GED or high school diploma. The amount of time parents are allowed to search for a job while maintaining eligibility for a subsidy will affect both employment and child care stability.**
- Two-thirds of subsidy recipients experience one or more constraints on child care choices due to their work schedules. Constraints include evening or night shifts, weekend shifts, or a week or less advance notice of a shift. These schedules make it very difficult to use centers and somewhat difficult to use regulated homes. **Due to work constraints a portion of parents using subsidy lean on relative or unregulated child care options. Interventions should target activities that increase the ability of relatives and other unregulated caregivers to support development and learning likely to improve outcomes for children. There are some promising interventions focused on family, friend, and neighbor care that could be explored.**

- Almost a third of subsidy parents use more than one provider simultaneously. Surprisingly, parents often pay for a secondary provider out of their own funds. **Subsidy program materials could clearly state that secondary providers could receive payment.**
- Two findings show how subsidy receipt affects child care choices. First, subsidized primary providers were twice as likely to be a center and about five times as likely to be regulated nonrelative caregivers as were those providers paid totally with parents' own funds. Second, education and skill of the provider and supporting children's learning were in parents' highest ranked reasons for selecting subsidized providers but not in the same list for unsubsidized providers. The findings provide evidence that parents want skilled providers and developmental support and act on it (list it as the top reason for selecting the provider) when the subsidy makes it an option. **Increased support for parent decision making may help parents make the link between what they want for their child and what is available. For example, supported access to the new Quality Indicator Program website will help parents compare child care facilities on child care characteristics research shows support development. Another implication is that parents may need time and assistance to explore options and policies should not only support decision making with information, but also with sufficient time for a considered search.**
- The top reasons for selecting a provider vary by whether or not the provider is paid by the subsidy program. Relating to family management, cost is not in the top five reasons for selecting a subsidized provider but it is the second most highly ranked reason for subsidy leavers. Location and having a familial relationship rank in the top five regardless of who pays the provider. Relating to what a parent wants for their child, they want a caregiver who is trustworthy and a facility that is safe, healthy, and clean. **Increased understanding of what characteristics of child care are important to parents has direct implications for consumer education such as that delivered through local child care resource and referral agencies.**
- Trustworthiness is the top reason reported for selecting a provider when thinking about what the parent wants for their child regardless of who pays for the provider, almost a third of parents list it as their top reason. **Understanding the role that trustworthiness plays in subsidy parent child care decisions is critical to providing appropriate support.**
- Findings from the survey confirm that the vast majority of subsidy recipients have child care costs and that for half of them it includes more than their copay. Further, the costs are substantial, consuming on average 17% of household income. Oregon has a goal that parents spend less than 10% of household income on child care. Even with a subsidy, child care costs typically exceed 10%. **Policy revisions that limit copays to less than 10% of household income and make them more stable are in line with Oregon goals. Requiring larger income changes before increasing copays could stabilize child care costs.**
- With or without a subsidy, parents manage child care costs primarily by increasing and juggling debt and reducing expenditures, including essentials such as medical care. **Paying for child care increases the debt load of families even while receiving a subsidy with consequences for parents' ability to become self-sufficient. The inability to pay for care restricts child care options.**

Introduction

The Subsidy Policy Impact (SPI) Research Project aims to increase understanding of how child care subsidy policy affects parents' decisions about employment and child care. Substantial changes in Oregon child care subsidy policy in October 2007 provided the impetus for the research project. Oregon went from having the least to having nearly the most generous subsidy policies in the country and this change provide an opportunity to examine how subsidy policy impacts families. The Project uses a sequential, mixed-method design in which three studies, each of which builds from the findings of the previous method(s), provide a more complete picture of parents' experiences than could be provided with any single study.

The first study involved in-depth interviews with 44 parents and 17 of their providers (Qualitative Study). Findings from that study shaped development of the questionnaire used in the telephone survey of 580 parents. The first study also provided the research questions being addressed in the third study, the analysis of administrative data for the over 40,000 parents who entered the subsidy program between 2005 and 2009. Those findings will be reported separately. In this report we use the findings of the first study as the framework for reporting the findings from the telephone survey. Thus, we can assess the extent to which the findings from the in-depth interviews can be generalized to a broader group of subsidy parents and enrich the findings from the telephone survey by relating them to the deep understanding that came from the in-depth interviews.

FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

For each of the 44 parents interviewed, Scott and colleagues (2011) collected information on employment and child care between 2007 and 2009, tracking precisely any changes in child care or employment over the two years. They explored parents' experience with the subsidy program, reasons for breaks in subsidy receipt, and what happened with child care in the periods in which they did not receive a subsidy.

One of the most surprising findings from the qualitative study relates to child care costs for parents who were receiving a subsidy. Child care costs and its unpredictability emerge as important components of subsidy parents' experience. Closely related are findings of high amounts of change in jobs, work schedules, and child care arrangements. Scott and colleagues (2011) document the strategies subsidy parents use to manage the stresses of low-wage work, including the level of unpredictable change associated with it.

TELEPHONE SURVEY

In addition to determining how typical the patterns found in the in-depth interviews are for a larger group of parents with subsidy experience, the telephone survey provides more information on child care costs and its fluctuation. Further, inclusion of parents who had exited the subsidy program in the four months prior to the interviews provides the opportunity to learn more about why parents leave the program and to compare key decisions of parents on the program with those of parents off of it.

We present the findings under five headings:

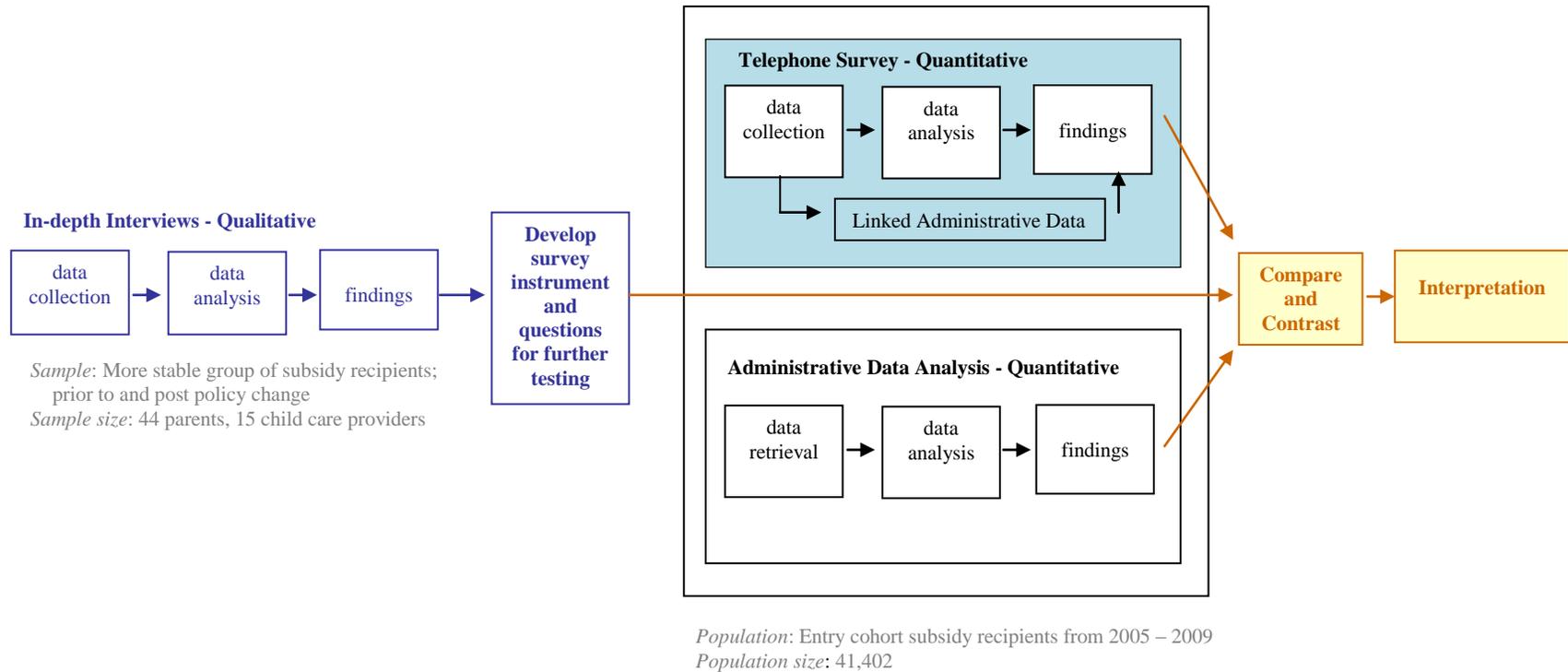
- Characteristics of employment
- Child care arrangements
- Child care selection
- Fluctuation of child care costs
- Impact of the child care subsidy program.

The report begins by graphically illustrating how this study fits within the context of the larger SPI Research Project. We then specifically outline the research questions to be addressed in this report and discuss the methods and data collected. The findings are organized under the five headings bulleted above. Under each of the headings, we first summarize findings from the qualitative study and then report findings from the telephone survey data. We end with the significance of the study and policy recommendations.

Sequential Mixed-Method Research Design

This study is part of a larger Research Project that uses a sequential mixed-method design. A strength of this mixed-method design is that it uses three sequential methods, each of which builds from the findings of the previous method(s), to provide a more complete picture of parents' experiences. The focus of this report is the Telephone Survey of subsidy recipients (blue shaded box). The quantitative research questions formulated for the telephone survey were based on the findings from the qualitative study. In addition, the design includes linking administrative data to telephone survey data when respondent permission was received.

Sample: More stable group of subsidy recipients
Sample size: 580 completed surveys from parents (461 subsidy, 118 nonsubsidy, 1 no answer)



Research Questions

The purpose of the SPI Research Project is to increase understanding of how subsidy policy impacts participating parents' employment and child care decisions. The qualitative study, the first of the SPI Project's three studies (Scott, Leymon, & Abelson, 2011), informed the design of the telephone survey study whose findings are reported in this paper. The telephone survey enables us to empirically evaluate the patterns that emerge as important to child care subsidy parents from the qualitative study as well as addressing policy questions that prior research using administrative data could not address. The most unexpected finding from the qualitative study is the reported experience of unpredictability in parents' child care costs. We hypothesize that unpredictability could affect parent employment and child care decisions. Specifically, we examine the components of out-of-pocket costs for child care, the amount of cost burden, parent perception of how much child care costs fluctuates, and its' association with parental decisions. Along with an examination of unpredictable costs, we explore more broadly parents' employment and child care arrangements in order to increase understanding of the decisions they make and the role that child care subsidy policy plays in those decisions. In this report we use the findings from the qualitative study to frame the research questions we address with the survey data.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYMENT

- How many subsidy participants are working, going to school, or in job training programs? What are the differences in employment, schooling, and job training of those receiving a subsidy compared to those who are not?
- To what extent do employment schedules and work hours constrain child care options of subsidy users? What percent work unpredictable schedules? What percent work evenings, nights or weekends?
- How many subsidy parents indicate they have work flexibility?

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

- What percent of subsidy and subsidy leaver parents use multiple providers?
- What type of care are the subsidy parents using for their children?
- Does the type of provider selected by those who are receiving a subsidy differ from those who are not receiving a subsidy?
- To what extent are the child care arrangements of subsidy children with special needs like those of subsidy children without special needs?

CHILD CARE SELECTION

- What are the reasons subsidy parents report for the provider they select?
- When subsidy parents use more than one provider, are the reasons for selecting the same for all providers?

FLUCTUATION OF CHILD CARE COSTS

- What percent of subsidy and subsidy leaver participants who use child care have child care costs? What is the cost?
- What makes up the financial costs experienced by parents? That is, what are the components of out-of-pocket costs for child care?
- Do subsidy parents' perceive that their costs fluctuate (over the last 3 months)? What triggers changes in child care costs?
- What strategies do subsidy parents employ to manage an increase in child care costs? What strategies do parents employ to manage child care costs when they stop receiving subsidy assistance?

IMPACT OF THE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

- What would parents do if they lost access to the subsidy program?

Methods and Data

This section describes the methods used to collect the telephone survey data. The Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) at Washington State University was contracted to conduct the statewide telephone survey of child care subsidy recipients.

SAMPLING DESIGN

In order to study how subsidy policy impacts parental decision making we needed to be sure that we were talking with parents who had more than a few months of experience with the subsidy program and who had young children. The overall focus of the sampling design was to study stable participants of the child care subsidy program. Restricting the study to parents with somewhat stable subsidy participation enabled us to: (1) ensure that parents have sufficient experience with the subsidy program to be able to describe impact of participation including having experienced fluctuation in child care costs, and (2) be consistent with the characteristics of the qualitative study participants. Thus, the characteristics of the sample design included parents who received a child care subsidy on December 2009 (the last month administrative data was available for selecting the sample frame), received a subsidy 7 of 12 months between January – December 2009, and had at least one child under the age of 5 as of December 2009 (see Table 1). As described in detail below, the sample represents parents who are relatively stable users of the subsidy program.

Table 1. Sampling Design

Characteristics of the Sample	Stratification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Need to have received a child care subsidy in December 2009 <i>[rationale: currency of contact information, reduce issues related to recall bias, last month administrative data was available]</i> + Receiving a child care subsidy 7 of 12 months – 12 month period: January-December 2009 <i>[rationale: wanted a more stable group who could have experienced possible fluctuation in costs, and who had been through one recertification period]</i> + At least one child is under the age of 5 as of December 2009 <i>[rationale: wanted to make sure they had young children that needed child care]</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Type of care – (a) center, (b) nonrelative home based, (c) relative home-based <i>[rationale: Type of care chosen by parents is of high policy interest but we needed to be sure that we had enough parents in each type of care to produce accurate and reliable findings. Therefore we merged subsidy type of care variables into the three which we used in sample selection to ensure we had equal numbers in each type]</i>
Screening Criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + English speaking <i>[rationale: given that only 3% of subsidy recipients are non-English speaking parents, we could not obtain a large enough group of non-English speakers to be able to analyze the data by language group]</i> + No Teen Parents 	

In order to ensure that all types of care were adequately represented in the study, we stratified the sample by type of care. The study captured both current and former subsidy users to explore why parents exit the subsidy program and what parents do for child care after exiting. A four-month gap between the benefit month from which we pulled the sample (December 2009) and when the interviews took place (May 2010), ensured that some parents would have left the subsidy program by the time of the interview.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Oregon State University provided SESRC with an electronic list of 4,551 low income parents in Oregon who received a childcare subsidy in December 2009. The source of the sample frame was the subsidy program administrative data provided by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS). SESRC contacted 2,036 randomly selected household telephone numbers out of the population OSU provided. Table 2 shows the number sampled from each of the types in the sample along with the final sample weights for each type.

Table 2. Population and Sample Breakdown by Type

<i>Type of Care</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Final Weights</i>
Center	954	676	214	4.4579
Nonrelative home based	2812	690	193	14.5699
Relative home based	785	670	173	4.5376
Total	4551	2036	580	

SURVEY INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The survey instrument was adapted from the instrument developed and tested for the Design Study of the National Survey of Child Care Supply and Demand (now called National Study of Early Care and Education (NSECE)). We modified the NSECE instrument in order to extend the findings of the qualitative study and to address policy questions that previous studies could not examine because of reliance on administrative data. The instrument included sections on who lives in the household, complete schedules for a full week of parent’s current employment and child care arrangements, fluctuation of child care costs, and demographics (see Appendix A.1 for Survey Instrument). We also asked if the parent attended school or participated in training.

As part of the survey instrument we also asked for parent consent to access their child care related government program records. If the respondent agreed to the consent, we link the telephone survey data with the participant’s child care subsidy records held by DHS. Verbal consent from the respondent for this purpose has been repeatedly deemed sufficient by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Ethics Review Board, and meets the HIPAA Privacy Rule requirements. Ninety-one percent of parents who completed the telephone survey provided permission to access their administrative records.

DATA COLLECTION

SESRC used Total Design Method (TDM) principles to design and implement the phone survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). The key element of the TDM survey procedure was to implement carefully designed and timed contacts to the survey sample. The SESRC mailed 2,010 prior notification letters to respondents in Oregon via first class mail on May 7, 2010 and invited them to participate in the telephone survey. The letter explained the purpose of the survey and included a \$1 incentive.

The pre-test calling started on April 16, with an initial sample of 100 cases. The full study calling began on May 10, 2010 and was completed on May 20, 2010. Interviewers asked to speak with the respondent

who received a child care subsidy in December 2009. All cases received up to 10 call attempts over the 10-day period in May 2010. These call attempts alternated days of the week and time of the day. If an interviewer called at an inconvenient time for the respondent, the interviewer attempted to schedule a specific time to re-contact the respondent for an interview. The average interview length for the survey was about 25 minutes. All respondents who completed the survey received an additional incentive of \$15.

The final sample included **580** completed interviews and 14 partially completed interviews. There were 24 who refused to participate, 23 who could not be interviewed because of a language barrier, 1109 who were unreachable (73% due to answering machine messages on each of the 10 call attempts), and 282 non-working numbers (see Appendix B for complete disposition codes by stratification). The adjusted response rate¹ was 33.9% with a cooperation rate² of 96.1%. Although parents were hard to reach, they readily completed the survey when we did reach them.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBSIDY TELEPHONE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Of the 580 telephone survey participants, 461 indicated they were currently receiving a child care subsidy from DHS at the time of their interview; 118 were not receiving a subsidy and 1 elected not to answer the question. Most of the analyses will be of data from respondents who were receiving a subsidy at the time of the interview. Analyses of data from respondents no longer on the subsidy enhance understanding of how subsidy policies and practices impact families in a number of areas. We will clearly note when the data comes from respondents not participating in the subsidy program at the time of the interview (i.e., subsidy leavers).

Subsidy Participants (n=461)

Table 3 shows the weighted demographic characteristics of the 461 telephone survey subsidy participants. Throughout the report we use sample weights when analyzing the survey data. Provided by the survey firm, these weight the cases proportional to the overall sample frame of stable subsidy recipients, while preserving the overall number (n) in the sample of completes.

The characteristics show a mean of 2.16 children in the household, with slightly fewer (2.04) children under the age of 13, and a mean of 1.4 adults (Table 3). Seventeen percent of families indicate there is at least one special needs child in the household; accounting for 10.8% of children (under the age of 13) in the sample. Special needs is defined as a child having a physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that affected the way the parent provided care for him/her. This result is in comparison to 13.6% of Oregon children who have been identified as having special health care needs under the age of 18 (Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, n.d.). The majority of the children living in the household are sons or daughters of the parent (97%). Most (71.9%) live in households with monthly incomes of \$1,500 or less. Eighty percent of parents are employed. The vast majority of the

¹ Adjusted response rate is the ratio of the number of completed and partially completed interviews to the total number of potential respondents who are deemed eligible to complete the interview. The adjusted response rate was: $(\text{Completed} + \text{Partials}) / [(\text{Completed} + \text{Partials} + \text{Refusals} + \text{Language Barrier} + \text{Unable to reach})] = (580 + 14) / [(580 + 14 + 24 + 23 + 1109)] = 33.9\%$.

² The cooperation rate is another type of response rate and is the ratio of the number of completed and partially completed interviews to the number of completed, partially completed, and refused cases. The formula for calculating the cooperation rate is: $(\text{Completed} + \text{Partials}) / [(\text{Completed} + \text{Partials} + \text{Refusals})] = 580 + 14 / 580 + 14 + 24 = 96.1\%$.

Table 3. Weighted Demographic Characteristics of Telephone Survey Subsidy Participants (N=461)

Variable	Mean/ Frequency	Std. Dev	Range
Number of children in household	2.16	3.12	1-8
Number of children under 13	2.04	2.84	1-8
Number of adults in household (including respondent)	1.40	1.93	1-7
Respondent's Age (in years)	28.66	15.01	18-52
Special needs child in household	16.9%		
Relationship of respondent to child(ren)			
Son or daughter	97.0%		
Stepchild	0.4%		
Brother or sister	0.2%		
Grandchild	0.3%		
Other relative (niece/nephew)	1.6%		
Other nonrelative	0.5%		
Monthly household income			
Less than \$500	9.6%		
\$500 to less than \$1000	25.2%		
\$1000 to less than \$1500	37.1%		
\$1500 to less than \$2000	17.9%		
\$2000 to less than \$3000	9.2%		
\$3000+	0.9%		
Employed	80.4%		
Adult household structure of Respondent			
Single living alone	70.3%		
Single living with other adults	19.4%		
Living with a partner	6.4%		
Married	4.0%		
Parent's education level			
8 th grade or less	1.5%		
9-12 grade, no degree	11.9%		
High school graduate, GED	34.1%		
Some college	33.2%		
Associate degree	6.5%		
Vocational	7.4%		
Bachelors	5.1%		
Graduate or professional degree	0.4%		
Parent's race/ethnicity			
White/Caucasian	71.0%		
Black/African American	7.7%		
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.8%		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.1%		
Hispanic/Latino	15.9%		
Biracial	1.5%		
Current housing/living situation			
Renting apartment or house	87.9%		
Own a house or condo	3.7%		
Living in a friend or family member's house	8.3%		
Other situation	0.1%		

Table 3. (continued) Weighted Demographic Characteristics of Telephone Survey Subsidy Participants (N=461)

Variable	Mean/ Frequency	Std. Dev	Range
Own a car or have access to one	87.5%		
Urban/Rural classification			
Metropolitan	77.6%		
Micropolitan	20.5%		
Noncore	1.9%		

respondents are single, not living with other adults (70.3%) and who are on average 28.7 years of age. Nearly half (47.5%) have a high school education or less. The majority (71%) are Caucasian. Hispanic families comprised 15.9% of the sample, and Black families represented 7.7%. Almost all (87.9%) are renting an apartment or house or living with a friend or relative (8.3%), own or have access to a car (87.5%), and living in metropolitan³ communities (77.6%).

We also compare the demographic characteristics of the telephone survey subsidy participants (Table 3) with (a) the telephone survey initial sample of subsidy recipients, and (b) all new entries to the subsidy program from October 2005 through September 2009 (columns B and A, respectively, in Appendix C). The purpose of these comparisons is to give us a sense of how our findings can be generalized to the initial sample from which the respondents were selected and to the universe of subsidy participants.

By design the initial sample and subsequently those who completed the survey represent more stable subsidy recipients. We see expected and not usually substantial differences between the universe of subsidy recipients and the subsidy participants surveyed. As found in prior research (Grobe, Weber, & Davis, 2007), respondents with more stable subsidy use have more children and more children on subsidy, higher education, higher incomes, are more likely to be employed, and less likely to be on TANF. Due to a 2007 change in how race/ethnicity was captured in the subsidy program data we are not able to compare the subsidy respondents to all subsidy recipients on race/ethnicity. We conclude that study findings can be generalized to subsidy participants whose participation is relatively stable.

Subsidy Leavers (n=118)

As indicated above, because of the gap between when the sample was drawn and when the interviews took place some parents were not receiving a subsidy at the time they were interviewed. A total of 118 parents no longer received a subsidy. Including them in the survey provided an opportunity to find out how they differed demographically from subsidy participants, what they were doing after subsidy exit, and why they stopped receiving a subsidy for child care.

The participants not currently receiving subsidy differed from the subsidy participants in a number of important ways. The subsidy leavers had slightly fewer children and fewer children with special needs. They had less education, lower incomes, and were more likely to not be employed compared to subsidy participants. There was a higher incidence of subsidy leavers who were living with a partner, with slightly

³ Counties are classified as metropolitan if they include an urbanized area of 50,000 inhabitants or more, plus outlying counties with close economic or social ties to the central county. Micropolitan counties include at least one urban cluster of between 10,000 and 49,000 people, plus outlying counties with strong economic and social relationships to the central county. Noncore counties have no population cluster larger than 10,000, and so typically are the most rural.

more homeowners and more who were living with a friend or family member. There were also more Caucasian and less Hispanic subsidy leavers compared to subsidy users.

A large proportion (43%) of subsidy leavers were not working, in school, or participating in job training activities the week prior to their interview. Around a third (33.7%) were working, or working in conjunction with going to school or participating in job training. The remaining 23% were in school or job training or both. Their activities at the time of the interview were reflective of their reasons they stopped receiving a child care subsidy (Sidebar 1).

The primary reason for no longer receiving a subsidy was job loss (41.7%), followed by short-term leave from employment (11.8%) such as maternity leave, short-term disability, or dental surgery. Eight percent quit working in order to complete schooling. A small group (1%) lost eligibility because self-employment no longer qualified a parent for the subsidy program. Employment eligibility reasons accounted for 62% of exits.

Income changes accounted for the next largest group of reasons for leaving subsidy. Approximately eight percent lost eligibility because their earnings increased their household income above the income eligibility limit. A small group lost eligibility because marriage (3.4%) or receipt of other income such as child support (2.4%) made them over income.

Provider changes accounted for 11% of exits. For example, a couple of children moved into a free child care program and in other cases providers retired or moved. A small percent of providers would not work with the subsidy program (0.5%).

Sidebar 1

Why did you stop receiving a subsidy or state assistance for child care? (N=115)	%
Job loss	41.7
Short-term leave from employment	11.8
Provider change	10.9
Earnings increased my household income beyond the income eligibility limit	8.7
Lost eligibility because parents are only going to school	7.9
Program related	5.2
Getting married increased household income beyond the income eligibility limit	3.4
Child related	2.9
Other income such as receiving child support increased household income beyond the income eligibility limit	2.4
Missed recertification	2.0
Decided didn't want or need help from government	2.0
No longer eligible because they are self-employed	0.9
Provider will not work with the subsidy program	0.5

Note: 3 respondents did not answer this question. All percentages are weighted.

If the parent was employed after they exited the subsidy program they had different reasons for exiting. Increased income was the most common reason cited for exit (38% versus 15% for all), provider changes were also more likely to be indicated as a reason (33% versus 11%), and employment changes were far less likely to have led to the exit (16% versus 62%).

We also looked at the type of care subsidy leavers were using prior to leaving the subsidy program through administrative records compared to interview data where they indicated they were no longer receiving a subsidy (sidebar 2). The results show higher uses of center and regulated nonrelative care while subsidy leavers were receiving a subsidy compared to type of care reported when not receiving a

subsidy (38.1% and 15.5% versus 11.0% and 0.4%). When not on subsidy the same parents were much more likely to use unregulated nonrelative and relative providers (18.9% and 60.4% versus 10.7% and 27.4%).

Sidebar 2

Subsidy Leavers who Indicated they were Currently Using a Primary Provider (N=84)

Type of Care	<i>Last month they received subsidy before interview using 2010 administrative data</i>	
	<i>administrative data</i>	<i>Telephone Interview Data</i>
Center	38.1%	11.0%
Regulated Nonrelative	15.5%	0.4%
Unregulated Nonrelative	10.7%	18.9%
In-home	9.2%	9.6%
Relative	27.4%	60.4%

Note: 84 of the 92 total subsidy leavers who indicated they were currently using a provider gave permission to look at administrative records.

The care provided by subsidized providers was relatively stable. When looking at administrative data only for subsidy leavers, we found that parents were with their last child care provider, on average, 7.2 months prior to when they left the subsidy program. We have no data on the stability of the nonsubsidized providers these subsidy leavers were using at the time of the telephone survey.

Findings

The findings are organized under the following five headings: (a) characteristics of employment, (b) child care arrangements, (c) child care selection, (d) fluctuation of child care costs, and (e) impact of the child care subsidy program. Under each heading, we first summarize findings from the qualitative study and then report findings from the telephone survey data. The focus of the findings will be on those participants who were receiving a subsidy at the time of their interview. When relevant we will also report findings on subsidy leavers for comparison purposes and to learn about those who left the program.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYMENT

Qualitative Study Findings (Scott, et al., 2011)

Parents struggled to manage the stressors of low-wage work. The conditions of employment common to the parents in the qualitative sample included the following:

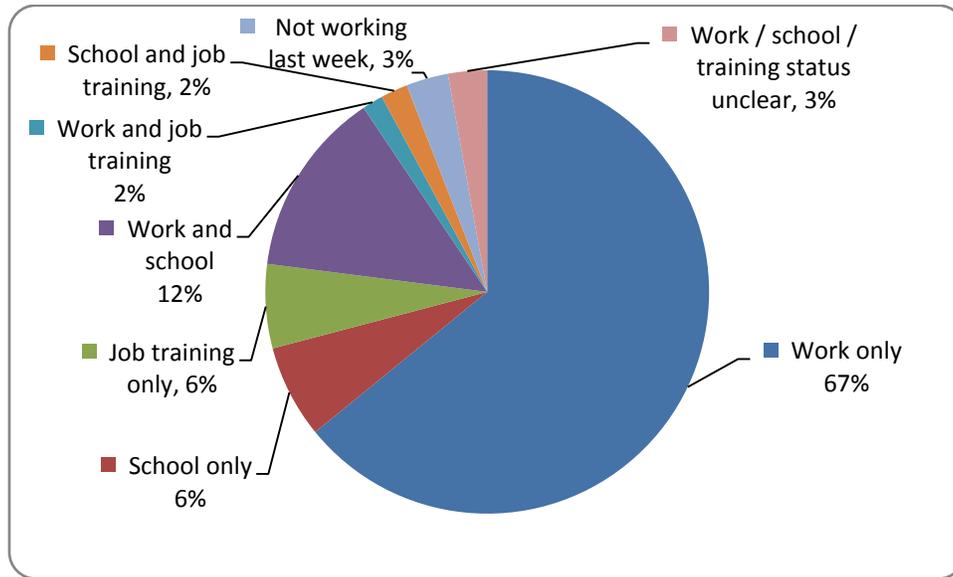
- rates of unemployment substantially higher than the state average
- job instability (more than one job) during the study period
- low wages averaging \$10.83 per hour
- variable hours of work
- variable schedules
- nonstandard hours
- inadequate employment benefits, such as health insurance, paid time off, and retirement
- most had relatively flexible employers and did not risk job loss if they needed to be absent or leave early due to a family emergency.

Using the telephone survey data we were able to explore conditions of low-wage work with a larger sample of stable subsidy parents. We asked parents if they were currently working, going to school, and/or in a job training program. Those who indicated they were working were then asked about their work schedule each day last week – start time, end time, second shift start time and end time, and commute time. Data was also collected on schedule unpredictability and work flexibility.

How many subsidy participants are working, going to school, or in job training programs?

Figure 1 and Table 4 shows the breakdown of work, school, and training program activities for the 461 subsidy participants; what parents reported as their activities a week prior to their interview. Overall, 80% of the parents were working, working and going to school, or working and in a job training program. The largest category was work only at 67%. Six percent of the parents did not indicate doing any of these activities the week before their interview.

Figure 1. Work, School, and Training Program Activities of Subsidy Parents (N=461)



We also wanted to understand how these activities differed for those who were and were not receiving a subsidy at the time of the survey. The results in Table 4 show a larger percent of subsidy participants were working (80.4% versus 33.7%), while more subsidy leavers indicated no activities (43% versus 6% who were not working last week or status was unclear). Subsidy participants may not have been working last week for a variety of reasons: not scheduled to work, medical issues, on maternity leave, or searching for a job.

Table 4. Comparison of Work, School, and Job Training Activities by Subsidy and Subsidy Leaver Participants

	Subsidy Participants (N=461)		Subsidy Leavers (N=118)	
	<i>N</i> (unweighted)	<i>%</i> (weighted)	<i>N</i> (unweighted)	<i>%</i> (weighted)
Work only	293	66.9	39	31.5
Work and school	62	11.7	5	2.2
Work and job training	7	1.8	-	-
<i>Subtotal Working</i>	<i>362</i>	<i>80.4</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>33.7</i>
School only	31	6.3	21	20.4
Job training only	28	5.6	2	1.9
School and job training	9	1.7	2	1.0
Not working last week	14	3.0	-	-
Work/school/training status unclear	13	3.0	-	-
None of the above	-	-	49	43.0
Missing	4		-	

Note: These are reported activities in the week prior to the parent interview. One participant did not indicate whether or not they were currently receiving a subsidy.

Using data from all the participants together (subsidy users and leavers), fifteen percent did not indicate employment, schooling, or job training, and thus could be assumed to be unemployed.

To what extent do employment schedules and work hours constrain child care options of subsidy users?

In this section we look specifically at the employment schedules and work hours of our working subsidy respondents to better understand how these schedules and hours constrain their child care options.

Employment Schedules. We asked parents how many days in advance they knew their work schedule. Overall, 42.9% of working subsidy parents indicated their schedule was always the same from week-to-week (Table 5). Of the remaining 57.1% (200 parents), 61.3% had one week or less notice of their work schedule. Almost twelve percent had two weeks or less, and schedules for an additional 24% of parents changed at least every month.

Table 5. Days in Advance Working Subsidy Parents Knew Their Schedule (N=361)

<i>Usually, how many days in advance do you know your work schedule?</i>				
	Days Advance Notice	N (unweighted)	% of those with changing schedules (weighted)	% of all employed subsidy users (weighted)
Schedule is always the same	na	161	na	42.9
Advance notice	0-7	148	61.3	35.0
Advance notice	8-14	26	11.8	6.7
Advance notice	15-21	6	2.7	1.5
Advance notice	22-30	45	21.0	12.0
Advance notice	90	2	1.8	1.2
Advance notice	180	2	1.4	.7
		n=361	n=200	n=361

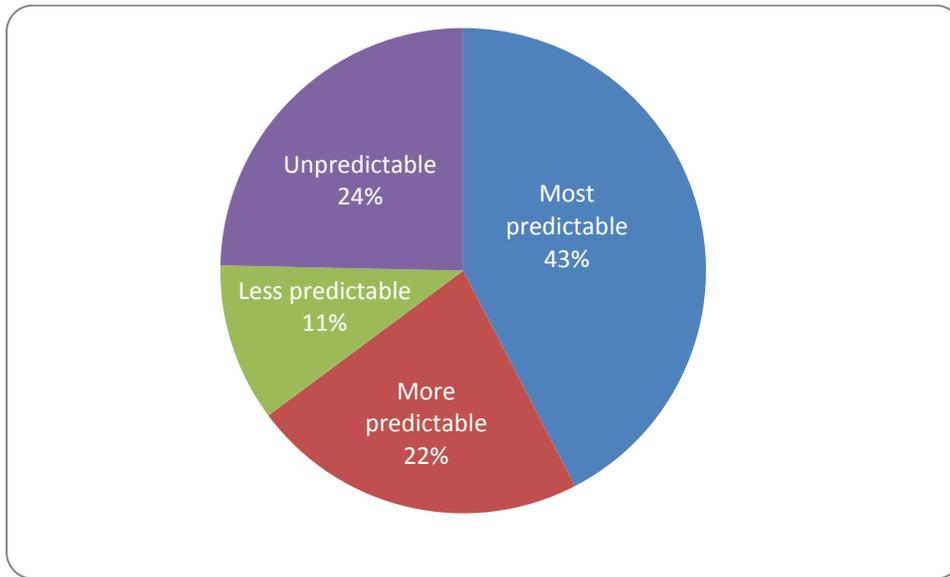
Note: 99 subsidy participants were not working, thus did not answer questions about work schedule. One working subsidy participant elected not to answer the questions on work schedule.

In addition to examining the days of advance notice by itself, we created a schedule unpredictability measure based on responses to: (a) days in advance parents knew their schedule, and (b) three questions⁴ on how well they could anticipate or count on the number and timing of hours they would be working week-to-week (Henly & Lambert, 2010). The results showed 24% of all employed subsidy parents' fell in the unpredictable schedule category⁵, 43% were in the most predictable category, and the remaining 33% had some level of unpredictability (Figure 2). These findings seems consistent with the qualitative study finding that just over half of the 39 parents employed or in job training had unstable schedules and/or little control over when they could choose to do extra shifts (Scott et al., 2011).

⁴ The respondents were asked how much they agreed (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree) with the following three statements: (a) you can easily anticipate what days and times you'll be working week-to-week, (b) most weeks, you can count on getting the number of hours you want, and (c) most weeks, you can count on working the days and shifts you want.

⁵ Unpredictable schedule is defined as one week or less notice of work schedule and scored in the bottom 1/2 of the work schedule scale (the combined score of questions in Footnote 3).

Figure 2. Schedule Unpredictability of Subsidy Parents (N=361)



Note: 99 subsidy participants were not working, thus did not answer questions about work schedule. One working subsidy participant elected not to answer the questions on work schedule.

Work Hours and Days. The times and days parents work can impose constraints on their child care options. Presser (2003) used the 1997 Current Population Survey (CPS) to understand the extent low-educated mothers worked nonstandard schedules (evening, night, rotating shift, or weekend) relative to higher educated mothers. She found a larger percent of low-educated mothers were working nonstandard work schedules (25.4% versus 18.6% for women with more than a high school education). In Table 6 we compare Presser findings with those from the sample of child care subsidy recipients who completed the telephone survey. The table first presents results for hours worked and then for days worked.

The hours worked section has six categories: fixed day, fixed evening, fixed night, hours vary, rotating, and unpredictable schedule. All but the last category were taken from Presser's work (2003). The telephone survey measured schedule unpredictability rather than shift rotation or variance in hours. Parents with unpredictable schedules may be working fixed day or fixed evening/night, but receive limited notice on what their work schedule will be and cannot count on the hours, days, or shifts that they will work. We felt it was important to separate out parents with unpredictable schedules regardless of whether they worked days, evenings, or nights as we were most interested in how work schedules constrain child care options. What days parents work is as relevant as the hours they work. Several differences emerged when comparing day's subsidy parents worked with Presser's sample of low-educated single mothers. More subsidy parents were working less than five days during the weekday (19.2% versus 5.9%), and working both weekdays and weekends but not all seven days (45.1% versus 30.9%). Fewer subsidy parents from the Telephone Survey were working weekday only, all five days compared to Presser's sample (33.5% versus 55.1%). Working weekends constrains child care options just as evening and night work hours and unpredictable schedules do (see Table 6). Despite differences in measurement, both CPS and Telephone Survey data document that work schedules constrain child care options for single mothers with low education.

Table 6. Standard and Nonstandard Work Hours and Days for Subsidy Participants

		Presser (2003, p.202) Single Mothers, HS Education or Less	Telephone Survey Working Child Care Subsidy Parents (weighted)
HOURS			
	Fixed Day [<i>worked 8am-4pm for most of their hours on most days that they worked</i>]	74.6%	64.2%
	Fixed Evening [<i>worked 4pm-midnight for most of their hours on most days that they worked</i>]	11.1%	10.8%
	Fixed Night [<i>worked 12pm-8am for most of their hours on most days that they worked</i>]	7.2%	0.9%
	Hours vary [<i>schedules changed periodically</i>]	3.8%	-
	Rotating [<i>irregular schedule not classified above</i>]	3.3%	-
	Unpredictable Schedule [<i>Defined as: One week or less notice of work schedule and scored in bottom 1/2 of work schedule scale: (a) extent to which you are able to count on the number of hours you will be working week-to-week, (b) most weeks you can count on getting the number of hours you want, (c) you can count on working the days and shifts you want</i>]	-	24.1%
DAYS			
	Worked weekday only, all 5 days	55.1%	33.5%
	Worked weekday only, less than 5 days	5.9%	19.2%
	Worked all seven days	7.2%	1.3%
	Worked weekday and weekend, less than 7 days	30.9%	45.1%
	Worked weekend only (Saturday and/or Sunday)	1%	0.8%
	NUMBER OF CASES	659	361

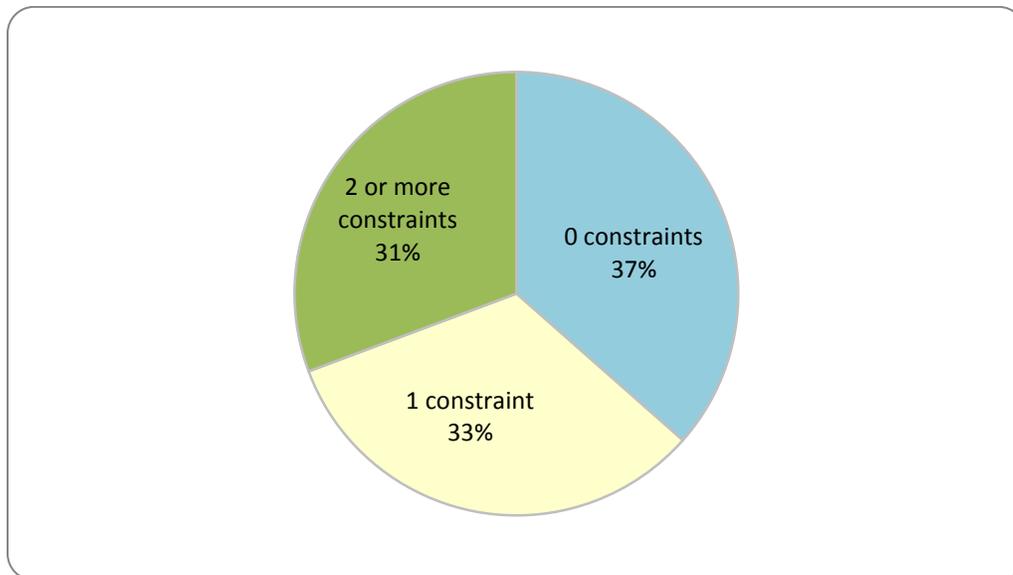
Note: 99 subsidy participants were not working, thus did not answer questions about work schedule. One working subsidy participant elected not to answer the questions on work schedule.

Constraints to Child Care Options. The results above highlight that a number of subsidy parents were working hours, days, or schedules that limit the type of child care they can choose. To better understand how many subsidy families in our sample did not work a standard, fixed schedule we created a variable that took into account unpredictable schedules, worked evening/night hours, or weekends. The categories were as follows:

- *Zero constraints:* had predictable schedules, did not work weekends, and did not work evening/night hours
- *One constraint:* had either unpredictable schedules, worked weekends, or worked evening/night hours
- *Two or more constraints:* two or more of the following – unpredictable schedules, worked weekends, or worked evening/night hours.

Figure 3 illustrates that 64% of parents had at least one work related constraint that would impact their child care options, with 31% of those parents having two or more. Data from the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network (email correspondence May 12, 2011) showed that only 5% of centers provided care on evenings, nights, or weekends. Forty-seven percent of family care homes provided care at one or more of those times.

Figure 3. Employment Constraints for Subsidy Parents (N=355)



Note: 99 subsidy participants were not working, thus did not answer questions about work schedule. Six working subsidy participants elected not to answer the questions that were used to create the constraints.

How many subsidy parents indicate they have work flexibility?

Respondents were asked three questions from Emlen's work flexibility scale (Desrosiers & Emlen, 1997): (a) how often does your shift and work schedule cause extra stress for you and your child, (b) how often where you work is it difficult to deal with child care problems during working hours, and (c) how often is your work schedule flexible enough to handle family needs. The scores of the three items were combined to create a work flexibility measure. Similar to the qualitative study findings, the vast majority of the telephone survey parents (91%) indicated either lots or some work flexibility (Table 7). Only 9% were classified as having limited work flexibility. In the qualitative study, Scott et al. (2011) found slightly

more with limited work flexibility (18% versus 9%) but both studies found that the vast majority had some or a lot of work flexibility.

Table 7. Work Flexibility Measure for Subsidy Participants (N=359)

	%
Lots of Work Flexibility	38.3
Some Work Flexibility	52.6
Limited Work Flexibility	9.2

Note: 99 subsidy participants were not working, thus did not answer questions about work flexibility. Two working subsidy participants elected not to answer the questions that were used to create work flexibility. All percentages are weighted.

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Qualitative Study Findings (Scott et al., 2011)

Thirty-two percent of parents had multiple arrangements. Of those with two or more providers, some paid one of the providers out-of-pocket and a few had two subsidized providers. Most parents were not aware they could have two subsidized providers. Secondary providers typically came from parents' social networks. Subsidy participation did not necessarily result in more stable arrangements but it did give parents options. When not satisfied or when they had concerns about the quality of their children's care, parents were able to seek a different provider.

In the telephone survey interview we asked respondents to indicate who looked after their child(ren) last week. Information on each provider included whether (a) care took place in the parent's home or somewhere else, (b) provider was paid by DHS, (c) provider was an individual or organization, (d) parent had a personal relationship with provider before caring for the child, (e) parents relationship to provider, and (f) provider cared for children from other families while caring for respondent's child/children. Responses to these questions were used to create type of care categories. In addition to collecting data on up to five providers for all the respondent's children, information was gathered on their child care schedule for the last week – start and end times for each day for up to four of their children under the age of 13. Most of the above information was also gathered on any provider who regularly (meaning at least 5 hours each week) cared for this child but did not do so last week.

In this section, the analyses are completed at two different units of analysis – family and child – depending on the question of interest. The family level data represents the 461 subsidy families who completed the interview. The child level data includes all the children under 13 in each of the subsidy families (n=926). Comparisons with subsidy leavers at the family (n=118) and child level (n=225) will be included for some of the analyses. Data on the child's child care schedule were collected for up to the four youngest children under the age of 13. Overall, only 3.1% (13) of families had more than four children under 13 years of age.

What percent of subsidy and subsidy leaver parents used multiple providers?

Table 8 shows the percent of families who were using one or multiple providers to care for their children. The data is shown for both subsidy participants and subsidy leavers. Sixty percent of subsidy families were using one provider, while 40% were using multiple providers to meet their child care needs. At the

child level, 68% of children had only one provider and 32% had multiple providers. Parents with infants and school-age children were more likely using one provider than those with toddler and preschool aged children. More subsidy leavers were using only one provider (68% at the family level and 78% at the child level). As shown in Table 8 results from the telephone survey were similar to those from the qualitative study where a significant minority of parents (32%) relied on multiple arrangements simultaneously to cover their child care needs (Scott, et al., 2011).

Table 8. Number of Providers at the Family and Child Level

	Subsidy Participants		Subsidy Leavers	
	Family ^a (N=438)	Child (N=813)	Family ^b (N=93)	Child (N=153)
1 provider	59.1%	67.6%	67.5%	77.6%
2 providers	29.8%	24.7%	27.1%	18.0%
3 providers	10.5%	7.5%	5.4%	4.4%
4 providers	0.7%	0.2%	-	-

^aThere were 23 subsidy parents in the sample who indicated they did not use a provider for care last week. Thirteen of these parents were not working the week prior to their interview. All percentages are weighted.

^bThere were 25 subsidy leaver parents in the sample who indicated they did not use a provider for care last week. Twenty-two were not working the week prior to their interview.

What type of care are the subsidy parents using for their children? Did the type of provider selected by those who were receiving a subsidy differ from those who were not receiving a subsidy?

In this section we looked at children’s primary provider, the provider who provided the most hours of care. We explored whether the type of provider selected differed by whether or not the parent was receiving a subsidy. Additionally, for parents who participated in the subsidy program we examined differences based on whether or not the provider was paid with the subsidy program; 7% of subsidy children’s primary providers were not paid by the subsidy program. In Table 9 we look at primary type of care used for three groups of providers: (1) providers of subsidy participants who were paid by the subsidy program, (2) providers of subsidy recipients who were not paid by the subsidy program, and (3) providers of subsidy leavers.

The results show that primary providers paid by the subsidy program were twice as likely to be centers (20.3% versus 10.0% versus 10.2%) and about five times as likely to be regulated nonrelative (23.3% versus 4.2% versus 0.5%) than those providers not receiving a subsidy (Table 9). A lower incidence of relative care (33.9% versus 76.1% versus 60.7%) was found for providers being paid by DHS. Parents were far more likely to use regulated providers (centers and regulated family child care) if the provider received payment from the subsidy program. The results indicate that subsidy receipt supports the goal of giving parents access to all types of care. Scott and colleagues (2011) found that secondary care was usually provided by members of parent’s networks, most typically relatives. They also found that not all providers of subsidy parents received payment from DHS and that finding was confirmed by findings from the telephone survey. They conclude that subsidy receipt gives parents options, especially when parents are not satisfied. Parents are able to seek new providers when they have concerns about the quality of their children’s care. The telephone survey findings support those of the qualitative study.

Table 9. Type of Care Categories by Primary Providers Paid and Not Paid by DHS

	Subsidy Participants		Subsidy Leavers
	Primary Provider Paid by DHS (N=696)	Primary Provider Not Paid by DHS (N=52)	Primary Provider Not Paid by DHS (N=121)
	%	%	%
Center	20.3	10.0	10.2
Regulated Nonrelative	23.3	4.2	0.5
Unregulated Nonrelative	13.3	2.1	19.0
In-home	9.3	7.6	9.7
Relative	33.9	76.1	60.7

Note: For the subsidy participants, 4 were missing data on whether the provider was paid by DHS. For subsidy leavers, 25 were missing total provider hours which were used to determine primary provider and 7 were missing one or more values to determine type of care. All percentages were weighted.

To what extent were the child care arrangements of subsidy children with special needs like those of subsidy children without special needs?

Seventeen percent of subsidy families indicated that at least one of their children had a physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that affected the way they provided care for this child; accounting for 97 (10.8%) children in the sample.

In the analysis of type of care used for children with special needs we included all primary providers of children of subsidy participants, regardless of whether or not the provider received a payment from DHS. When looking at primary provider, the results showed that the majority of special needs children were either in centers (22.3%) or being cared by relatives (42.3%) (Table 10). Another 12% or so of special needs children were in each of the other three categories (regulated nonrelative, unregulated nonrelative, in-home). In comparison, children with no special needs were less likely to be in center care (18.9% versus 22.3%), more likely to be in regulated nonrelative care (23.3% versus 10.3%), and less likely to be in relative care (36.4% versus 42.3%). When looking at their secondary provider, there is a high incidence of using relative care for both groups (60.4% versus 54.0%), and regulated nonrelative for children with special needs (18.2% versus 8.6%).

Table 10. Type of Care for Subsidy Children With Special Needs^a Compared to Those Children With No Special Needs

	Primary Provider (N=746)		Secondary Provider (N=166)	
	<i>No Special Needs</i> (N=666)	<i>Special Needs^b</i> (N=80)	<i>No Special Needs</i> (N=145)	<i>Special Needs</i> (N=21)
	Center	18.9%	22.3%	13.8%
Regulated Nonrelative	23.3%	10.3%	8.6%	18.2%
Unregulated Nonrelative	12.7%	12.6%	9.2%	0%
In-home	8.7%	12.5%	8.8%	9.7%
Relative	36.4%	42.3%	60.4%	54.0%

^a Special needs was defined as physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that affected the way parents provided care for their child.

^b 6 special needs children in the sample did not have a provider last week.
All percentages were weighted.

CHILD CARE SELECTION

Qualitative Study Findings (Scott, et al., 2011)

Factors driving parent’s child care choices (by the number of mentions):

1. Considerations relevant to employment, convenience, and affordability [hours of operation, flexibility, location, transportation, expense]
2. Provider attributes [nice, trustworthy, good care]
3. The appeal of the physical facility [cleanliness, condition of space and the toys, space to play inside and safe place to be outdoors]
4. General atmosphere and focus of the program [interactive provider, educational component]

As important as the characteristics of providers are they are “trumped by the issues of availability, flexibility, and convenience.” (p.25)

Given that the study aimed to increase understanding of how subsidy participation affects parents child care decisions, we asked parents to report their most important reason for selecting each of their providers. A first question asked parents to select from a list the *most important reason* when thinking about how to make child care work for their family. Another question focused on the *most important reason* when thinking about what they wanted for their child. Both questions were asked about each provider the parents indicated as looking after their children. We found when analyzing the data that separating reasons for selection into two lists (what works for the family and what the parent wants for the child) was problematic. A large proportion (48%) of parents answered "some other reason" to the question about making child care work for the family. When coding these open-ended responses we discovered that many of the responses corresponded with reasons from the list of reasons that we considered child-centered. Coding of the open-ended responses resulted in expanding both the family management and child-centered lists with the following reasons: familial relationship (responses such as "she is my mom" or "he is their dad"), comfort, and no other care option. We created expanded lists of reasons a parent selected for a given provider in order to capture all parent responses for both questions.

In this section, the analysis of reasons particular providers were selected were completed at the parent level (Provider 1, 2, 3, or higher). In this study we had two ways of categorizing providers, by parent and

by child. A parent used one or more providers for all of her children, but each of her children may have had different providers so we needed to be able to describe the parent’s providers separately from the child’s providers. At the child level we described providers by the number of hours they cared for that child. Primary means the provider who provides the most hours of care for a specific child. A provider may be the primary provider for one child but not another. At the parent level we categorized providers by the order in which the parent mentioned them. Provider 1 simply means the provider of care for one or more children that the parent mentioned first. Provider 2 and 3 were those also reported in the case in which a parent had more than one provider. For each provider, we asked parents why they selected that provider.

What were the reasons subsidy parents reported for the provider they selected?

We hypothesized that parent reasons for selecting a provider might vary depending on whether or not the subsidy program paid all or part of the costs associated with that provider. The age of the family’s youngest child might also affect what is perceived to be most important. We thus compared reported selection criteria by three groups: subsidy parents with a subsidized provider, subsidy parents with a non-subsidized provider, and subsidy leavers. As noted in the findings on child care arrangements, 7% of providers of parents who were participating in the subsidy program did not receive payment from DHS. We also explored the extent to which the priorities varied by age of the youngest child.

Table 11 displays the most highly ranked reasons for provider selection based on parent responses to the question of what was most important to make child care work for the family. Rankings of most important reasons are reported for three groups:

- Subsidy parent with a subsidized provider,
- Subsidy parent with an unsubsidized provider, and
- Subsidy leaver parent.

Although rankings varied substantially for the three groups all three ranked convenient location and familial relationship in the top five of their most important reasons. Cost was ranked 2nd for subsidy leavers and 4th for subsidy parents paying for the provider themselves. Cost did not even make it into the top five reasons for providers paid by DHS.

Table 11. Most Important Reason for Selecting Provider 1 to Make Child Care Work for the Family: Ranking by Provider Pay Status

Reason	Subsidy Parent/ Subsidized Provider <i>(N=394)</i>	Subsidy Parent/ Unsubsidized Provider <i>(N=36)</i>	Subsidy Leavers <i>(N=80)</i>
Convenient location	1 st	4 th	1 st
Familial relationships	4 th	1 st	3 rd
Flexible hours	2 nd	3 rd	Not in top five
Cost	Not in top five	4 th	2 nd
Will care for all parent’s children	5 th	Not selected	5 th
Was available	Not in top five	2 nd	Not in top five
Caregiver is trustworthy	3 rd	Not in top five	Not in top five
Comfort	Not in top five	Not in top five	4 th

As can be seen in Table 12 there was substantially more agreement about what parents wanted for their child across the three groups than was observed in rankings of what was most important to make child care work for a family. In fact, between 85% and 90% of parents’ most important reasons (depends on the

group of parents) were captured in the top five rankings. Agreement on what was most important for making child care work for the family was much lower with the top five rankings capturing between 63% and 75% of what parents considered most important (again the variance was across groups of parents). All three groups ranked a caregiver that is trustworthy the highest and a location that is safe, healthy, and clean was ranked 2nd or 3rd for all groups. All groups ranked a caregiver who shares their values in their top five and two groups ranked familial relationships highly. Interestingly, the education and skill of the provider and helping children do well in school only made it into the top five reasons when the provider was subsidized.

Table 12. Most Important Reason for Selecting Provider to Get What Parent Wants for Child: Ranking by Provider Pay Status

Reason	Subsidy Parent/ Subsidized Provider <i>N=394</i>	Subsidy Parent/ Un-Subsidized Provider <i>N=36</i>	Subsidy Leavers <i>N=80</i>
Caregiver is trustworthy	1 st	1 st	1 st
Location is safe, healthy, and clean	2 nd	3 rd	2 nd
Caregiver shares your values	3 rd	5 th	3 rd
Familial relationships	Not in top five	2 nd	4 th
Education and skill of provider	4 th	Not in top five	Not in top five
Caregiver helps children do well in school	5 th	Not in top five	Not in top five
No other option	Not in top five	4 th	Not selected
All of the above	Not in top five	Not selected	5 th

We compared rankings by age of youngest child, comparing rankings for the whole group with those of families whose youngest child was 2 or younger and with families whose youngest child was between 3 and 5. Although the ranking orders varied slightly, we observed few differences in the rankings of most important reasons for provider selection based on age of youngest child.

The high ranking of trustworthiness was striking. We hypothesized that trustworthiness may have been defined by the parent as a person with whom they had a relationship prior to their selection as a child care provider. Thus, we examined the relationship of trust as the top selection reason and whether or not the parent had a prior relationship with the child. Parents who reported that trust was the most important reason for selecting a provider for their child were highly likely to have selected a provider with whom they had a prior relationship; they had a prior relationship with from 70% to 100% of their providers. The opposite was not true, though. When looking at all parents who had a prior relationship with their provider, only about a third reported trust as the most important reason for selecting the provider for their child. Parents for whom trust was very important were very likely to select a provider they knew prior to the caregiving relationship.

Even with methodological differences, results from the qualitative study and the telephone survey are similar. In response to the question of what was most important in making child care work for the family many of the employment-related reasons that emerged from the qualitative study were confirmed. In both the qualitative and telephone survey studies, location and flexibility were found to be important. Familial relationships emerged as highly important only in the telephone survey and cost only emerged as important for nonsubsidized providers in the telephone survey. In response to the question about what was most important when thinking about what the parent wanted for the child, trustworthiness, health and safety, and a caregiver who shares the parent’s values rose to the top in the telephone survey. Similar

reasons for selecting a provider were identified in the qualitative study although the prominence given to trustworthiness and familial relationships appears to be stronger in the telephone survey.

When subsidy parents used more than one provider, were the reasons selected by the parent the same for all providers?

We hypothesized that parents may use more than one provider in order to meet multiple child and family needs. For example, a parent could select a center to support learning along with a home-based provider that can meet their work schedule. We further hypothesized that parents with multiple providers would have different reasons for selecting each provider. The data showed that the vast majority (77.4%) of subsidy parents who had two providers did cite different reasons for selecting each. A comparison of the differences in rankings of the most important reasons for Provider 1 versus Provider 2 provide further evidence that parents chose providers for different reasons. Availability and cost do not appear in the list of top eight reasons for Provider 1 but for Provider 2 they were 2nd and 6th in the ranking of reasons related to making child care work for the family. Similarly, in comparing lists of most important reason related to what the parent wanted for the child, “no other care option” and “provider was available” were in the top eight for Provider 2 and did not appear at all in the list for Provider 1. Parents appear to be putting together a package, using different reasons for selecting different providers rather than using set criteria for selecting providers.

FLUCTUATION OF CHILD CARE COSTS

Qualitative Study Findings (Scott, et al., 2011)

Parents experienced substantial and fluctuating financial burden associated with child care after October 2007, despite the intended effect of the policy change to reduce parent cost.

Strategies parents developed to cope with fluctuating and increasing copays included:

- Payment plans to providers (23 participants)
- Reliance on tax returns to pay back bills (22 participants)
- Bill juggling (19 participants)
- Denying luxuries on entertainment (15 participants)
- Reliance on network support (10 participants)
- Clothing hardships (10 participants)
- Risking medical hardship (3 directly stated; 22 spontaneously mentioned)
- Use of credit cards to pay bills (4 participants)

One of the major findings from the qualitative study was that parents could not predict their child care costs, including the amount of their copay. Other studies had found that subsidy parents had child care costs in addition to their copay and the difference between costs for those with and without a subsidy was not as great as one would expect (Danziger, 2004; Forry, 2009; Herbst, 2008). We felt it was important to test size and predictability of cost burden and therefore asked parents a series of questions about their child care costs.

What percent of subsidy and subsidy leaver participants who used child care had child care costs? What was the cost?

Given that the subsidy program aims to have parents share child care costs, it was not surprising that the vast majority of subsidy parents did have child care costs (82.6%). What was unknown was what percent

of subsidy parents had child care costs in addition to the copay. We found that about half of subsidy parents had child care costs in addition to copays. The costs for working subsidy parents was almost as great as that of working parents not currently receiving a subsidy (\$217.18 versus \$251.25) (Table 13). Child care costs represented, on average, 17.2% of household income for subsidy participants and 27.3% for subsidy leavers. Oregon has a goal that parents spend 10% or less of household income on child care.

Table 13. Child Care Costs and Cost Burden for Subsidy Participants and Subsidy Leaver Participants Who Used Child Care

	Subsidy Participants (N=438)			Subsidy Leavers (N=92)		
	% of parents with child care costs	Amount of Cost Burden (monthly)		% of parents with child care costs	Amount of Cost Burden (monthly)	
		Mean (Std. Dev)	Range/ Median		Mean (Std. Dev)	Range/ Median
All parents in this category	82.8%	\$215.68 (\$462.13)	\$2-1100	45.7%	\$251.25 (\$656.02)	\$40-1080
Cost burden as a percent of household income ^a	82.8%	17.2% (40.66)	14.2%	45.7%	27.3% (82.26)	17%
Work, School, or Training	79.4%	\$217.18 (\$468.13)	\$2-1100	45.7%	\$251.25 (\$656.02)	\$40-1080
No Work, School, or Training	3.4%	\$178.49 (\$282.27)	\$34-350	-	-	-

^a The midpoint of each household income interval was used to create a continuous household income variable.

What makes up the financial costs experienced by parents? That is, what are the components of out-of-pocket costs for child care?

In addition to asking parents how much they spent on child care, we also asked those who had child care costs what were the components of their out-of-pocket costs in the last three months. Table 14 presents the findings for subsidy participants who were using child care and indicated costs. We divided the sample into those who were working (some of whom were also going to school) and those only going to school. Almost all (96.8%) working subsidy parents with child care costs were paying a copay. In addition to copay, half (50.8%) paid the difference between what the state paid and what the provider charged, and almost a third (31.7%) paid other fees. Fewer than a quarter (22.5%) paid hours beyond those DHS approved. For those only going to school, two-thirds paid for hours while issues with DHS paperwork were being resolved, 61% paid extra money to the provider for special work or help, and around half paid for more hours of care because they were beyond those approved by DHS, hours not approved by DHS such as school breaks, or because the provider charged in blocks of time.

Table 14. Components of Child Care Costs (last 3 months) for Those Subsidy Participants with child care Costs and Using Child Care

Cost Component	Working (N=325)	School Only (N=12)
Paid a copay	96.8%	14.2%
Paid difference between what the state pays and what the provider charges	50.8%	9.5%
Paid provider fees (diapers, food, registration, supplies)	31.7%	29.8%
Paid for hours beyond approved by DHS	22.5%	50.0%
Paid for hours while issues with DHS paperwork were being resolved	15.1%	65.6%
Paid for hours not approved (by DHS) such as school breaks, holidays	13.1%	50.0%
Paid extra money to provider for special work or help	10.5%	60.8%
Paid for more hours because provider charges in blocks of time not hourly	9.7%	55.9%
Paid for hours not approved (by DHS) and spent going to school	6.3%	39.3%
Paid for hours not approved (by DHS) and spent looking for work	4.7%	35.7%
Paid for all hours because provider was not approved for DHS payment	3.2%	25.0%
Paid late fees	2.2%	0%

Note: There were only 5 respondents in the job training only category. Their child care costs were included under work, school, and training in Table 13. All percentages were weighted.

For subsidy leavers, we also asked about the components of their child care costs. Not surprisingly, the majority (84.7%) of working subsidy leavers were paying for hours of care while working (Table 15). Around two-thirds (68.4%) were paying for mandatory provider fees and almost a quarter (24.3%) paid for hours of care during school breaks.

Table 15. Components of Child Care Costs Since Not Having a Subsidy for Subsidy Leavers Using Child Care

Cost Component	Working (n=25)	School Only (n=15)
Paid for hours of care while working	84.7%	-
Paid mandatory provider fees (diapers, food, registration, supplies)	68.4%	97.1%
Paid for hours of care during school breaks (teacher conferences, holidays, snow days)	24.3%	8.5%
Paid for more hours because provider charges in blocks of time not hourly	17.4%	12.0%
Paid extra money to provider for special work or help	13.2%	14.9%
Paid late fees	11.3%	0%
Paid for hours of care while going to school	4.2%	86.7%
Paid for hours of care while looking for work	2.1%	16.4%

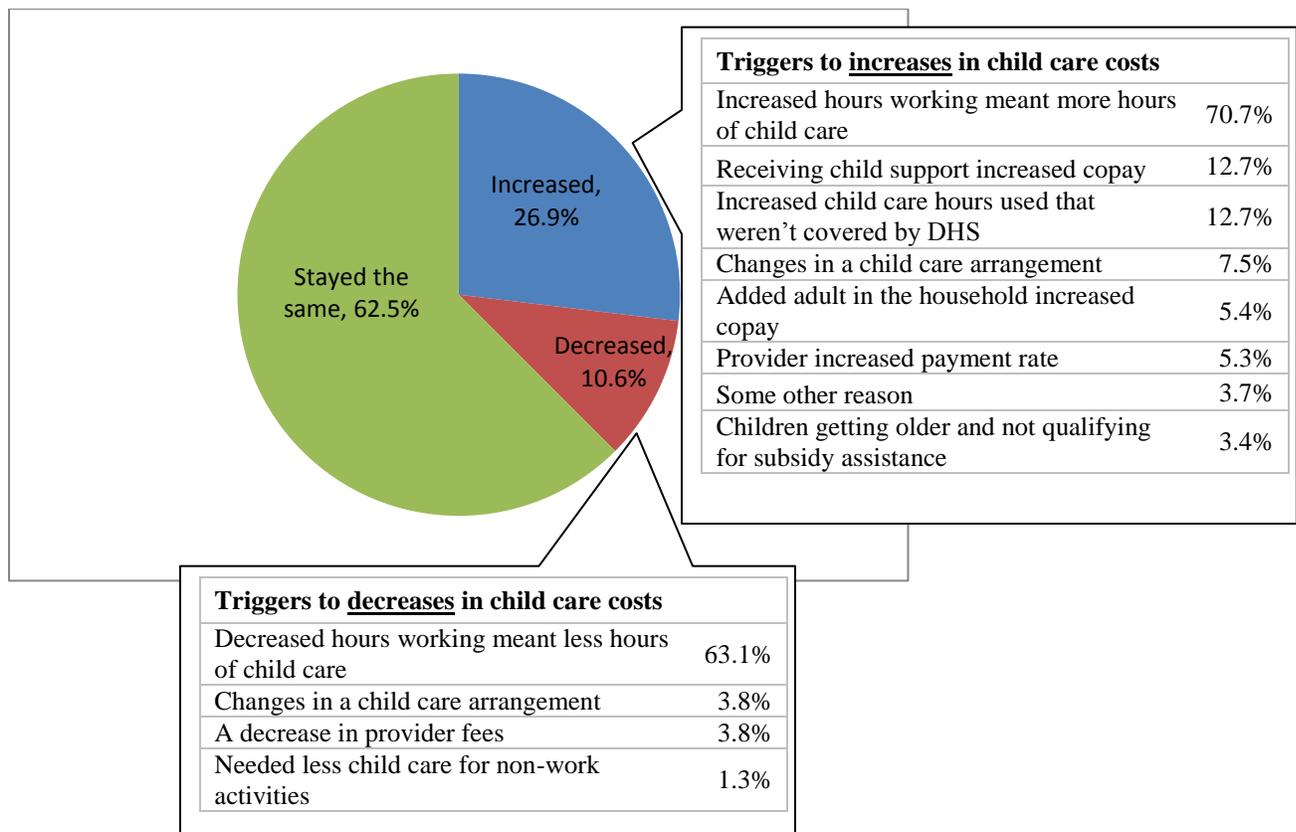
Note: There was only 1 respondent in the job training only category. All percentages were weighted.

Did subsidy parents’ perceive that their costs fluctuated (over the last 3 months)? What triggered changes in costs?

Child care costs were not perceived to fluctuate over the last 3 months for the majority of subsidy participants in the Telephone Survey. Almost two-thirds (62.5%) reported no fluctuation in their child care cost over the last 3 months (Figure 4). More than a quarter (26.9) felt their out-of-pocket child care expenses increased; changes due primarily (70.7%) to increased hours which translated to more hours of child care (Top Box within Figure 4). Subsidy participants who indicated their child care costs had decreased (10.6%) cited decreased hours of work as the primary trigger for decreased child care costs (Bottom Box within Figure 4).

Additional insights into how much subsidy parents’ costs fluctuated came from looking at the administrative data for those participants who gave permission to look at their records. We used administrative data over four years (2005-2009). The results showed that within more than half of subsidy spells⁶, copays changed. Further, in about half of the spells where families experienced a copay change, the difference between the highest and lowest change within a spell exceeded \$96. We also found changes in provider payments and hours billed to be extremely common as nearly all (96%) spells had changes in these. These administrative data results were more similar to the findings of the qualitative study. Scott and colleagues (2011) found that copays fluctuated for 55% of parents over a two year time period.

Figure 4. Subsidy Parents’ Perception of How Their Child Care Costs Fluctuated (Over the Last 3 Months) for Those Who Used Child Care (N=438)



⁶ A subsidy spell is a period of receipt of subsidized child care services (measured in months) which ends when there is a full calendar month in which no child in the family received subsidized care.

What strategies did subsidy parents employ to manage an increase in child care costs? What strategies did parents employ to manage child care costs when they stop receiving subsidy assistance?

For those subsidy parents who indicated an increase in their child care costs, we asked what strategies they employed to manage this increase. Cutting expenditures (entertainment, clothing, medical care, barter, etc.) was a frequently mentioned strategy (Table 16). Another strategy was to increase and juggle debt such as pay less on other bills, rely on tax returns, debt to provider, borrow from relatives, credit card use, or payday loans. A third strategy was to increase income with longer hours or additional shifts.

The subsidy leavers did all the things that subsidy parents did to manage child care costs when they stopped receiving subsidy assistance, but they employed some additional strategies (Table 17). They relied on family and friends to look after their child, moved in with friends and relatives after losing their home, increased hours or shifts to have more money for child care, or reduced hours or shifts because they could not afford child care. As shown in Table 9, 61% of non-subsidy arrangements were relatives and another 19% used nonregulated nonrelatives.

There were many similarities between these findings and those from the qualitative study (Scott et al., 2011). The reported reliance on payment plans, tax returns, and bill juggling confirms the importance of these strategies. Participants in both studies used the strategy of cutting expenditures, although it was mentioned by more of the participants in the telephone survey than in the qualitative study. Network support was an important strategy for both participants in the qualitative study and subsidy leavers in the telephone survey. Overall, these parents are finding multiple ways to manage increased child care costs, primarily by increasing debt and reducing expenditures.

Table 16. Strategies for Managing Increased Child Care Costs for Subsidy Participants Who Used Child Care (N=438)

Strategies for Managing Increased Child Care Costs	%
1. Spent less money on entertainment	69.3%
2. Postponed buying clothes	59.5%
3. Paid less on some other bills	50.7%
4. Relied on tax returns to cover debts	44.3%
5. Created a payment plan with provider	33.7%
6. Worked longer hours or get additional shifts	28.9%
7. Reduced food budget	24.2%
8. Borrowed money from relatives or friends	21.6%
9. Used credit cards	18.5%
10. Postponed medical care, filling prescription drugs, or getting dental care	16.6%
11. Used payday loans	11.2%
12. Took care of friends or relatives children in exchange for care for their own child	10.6%
13. Some other reason	3.7%

Note: All percentages were weighted.

Table 17. Strategies for Managing Increased Child Care Costs for Subsidy Leavers Who Use Child Care (N=92)

Strategies for Managing Child Care Costs	%
1. Spent less money on entertainment	80.4%
2. Relied on family and friends to look after child	71.5%
3. Postponed buying clothes	67.3%
4. Relied on tax returns to cover debts	58.9%
5. Paid less on some bills	50.8%
6. Created a payment plan with provider	48.7%
7. Postponed medical care, filling prescription drugs, or getting dental care	33.5%
8. Borrowed money from relatives or friends	27.0%
9. Used credit cards or payday loans	25.7%
10. Reduced hours or shifts	21.9%
11. Worked longer or got additional shifts	21.7%
12. Move in with friends or relatives	12.3%
13. Took care of friends or relatives children in exchange for care for their own child	11.5%

Note: All percentages were weighted.

IMPACT OF THE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Qualitative Study Findings (Scott et al., 2011)

Parents reported, “Without a subsidy, I could not work.” The subsidy program allowed parents to retain a job or cycle from one job to the next. The subsidy also allowed parents who were dissatisfied with an arrangement to make a change. Subsidy participation gives parents options.

Scott and colleagues (2011) found parents taken aback by the question of what they would do if they lost access to the subsidy program. After consideration, the majority said they could not work without a subsidy. It seemed important to see how a broader group of subsidy recipients responded to the same question. We asked that question only of the parents who were receiving a subsidy at the time of the interview (n=461).

We saw the same kind of confusion as found by Scott and colleagues. Almost two-thirds (64%) reported they would have to quit or they really did not know how they could make it work. Other parents described strategies similar to those they reported in managing their child care costs: increase debt or decrease expenses by finding relatives or others to care for their children, despite reporting by some that they felt care was unreliable and sometimes was not good for the children. Others discussed moving in with family or friends. The majority of the parents no longer on the subsidy program were not working and those who were working were commonly using relative care and sometimes living with others; all strategies that parents thought they might use if they lost the subsidy.

Table 18. Subsidy Participants Responses to What They Would Do Without Subsidy Assistance from DHS (N=454)

Categories	N	%
I probably would not work/ Probably quit my job/ Have a hard time working/ Have no job/ Not go to school/ Quit job and move in with parents/ Go on unemployment	136	30%
I don't know/Have no idea/ I am not sure/I have no idea	104	23%
I don't think I would be able to make it/ It would be hard/ I would have hard time/I would struggle/ I couldn't survive/ I would be screwed/ I would be stressed out/ It wouldn't work	49	11%
Get another job/ I would work more/ Get a good job/Get a night job/ Go back to school	39	9%
Stay at home and collect welfare/ Wouldn't have my kid in daycare. I couldn't afford it/ I wouldn't be able to afford childcare	39	9%
Be homeless and jobless/ Be broke/ Be drowned/ Be even poorer/ Be on the streets dealing drugs/ Be in huge debt/I'd live in a cardboard box/ Live in a shoebox	22	5%
Have family watch child(ren) for free/ Try to rely on family but it's not very reliable/ Begging my family/ Have mother watch them and pay her out of pocket/ Have senior family members keep my kids/ Make up a payment plan with my mom	19	4%
Pay more - pay out of pocket / Take out more student loans	20	4%
Other: Hope to hit lottery/ Apply for childcare grant at school/ Find other resources/ Taking out loans for childcare/ Call my social worker/ Move to Mexico/ Keep same provider/ I'd watch children	15	3%
Have child in lower quality child care/ Find someone cheaper, more kids, less convenient, fewer qualifications/ Put the kids somewhere I didn't want to put them/ Look for another child care	11	2%

Note: 7 participants did not answer this question. All percentages were weighted.

Significance of the Study and Policy Implications

The Subsidy Policy Impact Research Project includes three studies that use a combination of methods in order to increase understanding of how child care subsidies affect parental child care and employment decisions. In this report we use the findings of the first study, in-depth interviews with 44 subsidy recipients, as the framework for reporting the findings from the second study, the telephone survey of 580 current and past subsidy recipients. Thus, we can assess the extent to which the findings from the in-depth interviews can be generalized to a broader group of subsidy parents and enrich the findings from the telephone survey by relating them to the deep understanding that came from the in-person interviews.

Findings from the telephone survey of participants in the Oregon child care subsidy program confirm key findings from Scott and colleague's (2011) qualitative study of subsidy recipients. Parents perceive that the subsidy program enables them to be employed, and that without it they cannot make employment work. As Scott and colleagues discovered, employment stability does not mean job stability. Rather, staying employed typically involves losing a job followed by securing another job. In December 2009 all survey respondents were employed, going to school, or in training. By the time of the survey in May 2010, 15% were unemployed (not working, going to school, or in training). Access to a subsidy when the parent secures the next job appears critical to sustained employment. How tight the link between employment and subsidy eligibility will impact stability of subsidy usage and child care arrangements. **Reservation list policies and practices will affect the extent to which access to subsidy supports employment stability for parents experiencing job changes.**

In addition to confirming findings from the qualitative study, the telephone survey enables us to answer an important policy question: why parents leave the subsidy program. The vast majority of parents who exit the subsidy program do so for employment-related reasons such as job loss or short-term leave. Provider changes precipitate exits for about 11% of leavers and slightly more (15%) leave because of increased income. **A change in eligibility rules that would allow parents to reach 250% FPL would support their employment and stabilize their children's care.**

There is a striking similarity in what subsidy parents report they would do if they lost the subsidy and the behavior of parents who exited the program. Almost two-thirds of subsidy parents say that without a subsidy they could not work or do not know what they would do. Amongst the parents who exited the program, only a third are employed, many having lost the subsidy due to job loss. A little less than a quarter are in school, job training, or both. The remaining 43% are doing none of the above. When one combines the finding that subsidy parents experience frequent job changes with the finding that these employment-related changes account for the majority of subsidy exits, it appears that the link between subsidy receipt and employment is a major contributor to short subsidy spells. **Making student parents enrolled in educational institutions eligible for subsidies would enable parents to complete their education and thus increase employment options. This seems especially important for parents seeking a GED or high school diploma. The amount of time parents are allowed to search for a job while maintaining eligibility for a subsidy will affect both employment and child care stability.**

The work schedules of low-wage workers constrain parents' child care decisions. Two-thirds of subsidy recipients experience one or more constraints on child care choices due to their work schedules. Constraints include evening or night shifts, weekend shifts, or a week or less advance notice of a shift. Previous analyses (DHS, 2010, Okuyama, 2002) have documented that subsidy recipients are predominantly employed in industry sectors characterized by nonstandard work schedules (retail, hospitality, and health services). As Scott and colleagues document, relatives provide stable care for parents with non-standard work schedules. These schedules make it very difficult to use centers and

somewhat difficult to use regulated homes. In future analyses, we will explore in depth how work constraints predict child care usage. **Due to work constraints a portion of parents using subsidy lean on relative or unregulated child care options. Interventions should target activities that increase the ability of relatives and other unregulated caregivers to support development and learning likely to improve outcomes for children. There are some promising interventions focused on family, friend, and neighbor care that could be explored.**

Almost a third of subsidy parents use more than one provider simultaneously. Surprisingly, parents often pay for a secondary provider out of their own funds. Scott and colleagues found that some parents did not know the subsidy program would pay a second provider. Forty-four percent of children with a subsidized provider are in regulated care, either centers or regulated nonrelative care. Another third are with relatives. A subsidy child with special needs is more likely to be with relatives or in a center than are subsidy children without a special need. **Subsidy program materials could clearly state that secondary providers could receive payment.**

Subsidy receipt affects parents' child care decisions. Two findings show how subsidy receipt affects choices. First it is shown by the difference between providers paid wholly or partially with a subsidy and those paid totally with parents' own funds. Subsidized primary providers were twice as likely to be a center and about five times as likely to be regulated nonrelative caregivers as were those providers paid totally with parents' own funds. The second finding that demonstrates how subsidy receipt affects parent's child care decisions comes from the analysis of what parents report as the most important reasons for selecting their provider. Education and skill of the provider and supporting children's learning were in parents' highest ranked reasons for selecting subsidized providers but not in the same list for unsubsidized providers. These differences in observed usage and in parent reports as to why they selected a specific provider provide evidence that subsidy receipt provides parents access to centers and regulated homes. The findings provide evidence that parents want skilled providers and developmental support and act on it (list it as the top reason for selecting the provider) when the subsidy makes it an option. **Increased support for parent decision making may help parents make the link between what they want for their child and what is available. For example, supported access to the new Quality Indicator Program website will help parents compare child care facilities on child care characteristics research shows support development. Another implication is that parents may need time and assistance to explore options and policies should not only support decision making with information, but also with sufficient time for a considered search.**

Parents do not have a static set of reasons for selecting a child care provider. Rather, the top reasons for selecting a provider vary by whether or not the provider is paid by the subsidy program. Relating to family management, cost is not in the top five reasons for selecting a subsidized provider but it is the second most highly ranked reason for subsidy leavers. Location and having a familial relationship rank in the top five regardless of who pays the provider. Relating to what a parent wants for their child, they want a caregiver who is trustworthy and a facility that is safe, healthy, and clean. A caregiver who shares the parent's value also ranks in the top five reasons regardless of how the provider is paid. **Increased understanding of what characteristics of child care are important to parents has direct implications for consumer education such as that delivered through local child care resource and referral agencies.**

Trust plays a central role in subsidy parent child care decisions. Trustworthiness is the top reason reported for selecting a provider when thinking about what the parent wants for their child regardless of who pays for the provider, almost a third of parents list it as their top reason. Defining trust as having a relationship with the provider prior to using them for child care is likely to limit options to family and friends so we examined the relationship between having trust as the top reason and having had a prior relationship with the provider. Parents who reported that trust was the most important reason for selecting a provider for

their child were likely to have selected a provider with whom they had a prior relationship (over 70% parents). The opposite was not true, though. When looking at all parents who had a prior relationship with their provider, only about a third reported trust as the most important reason for selecting the provider. **Understanding the role that trustworthiness plays in subsidy parent child care decisions is critical to providing appropriate support.**

One of the most surprising finding from Scott and colleagues (2011) in-depth interviews with subsidy parents is that subsidy parents have substantial child care costs and that these costs fluctuate. Findings from the survey confirm that the vast majority of subsidy recipients have child care costs and that for half of them it includes more than their copay. Further, the costs are substantial, consuming on average 17% of household income. Working parents not receiving a subsidy spend only a little more on child care, but it represents 27% of their household income. Oregon has a goal that parents spend less than 10% of household income on child care. Even with a subsidy, child care costs typically exceed 10%. In both this and the qualitative study, about half of parents experience change in copays within a spell of subsidy use, with that change being substantial for half of those with any change. **Policies could be revised so that copays are more stable. For instance, requiring larger income changes before increasing copays could stabilize child care costs.**

With or without a subsidy, parents manage child care costs primarily by increasing and juggling debt and reducing expenditures, including essentials such as medical care. Parents without a subsidy control costs by relying upon relatives (61%) and nonregulated nonrelatives (19%) but still have higher costs than do parents receiving a subsidy. **Paying for child care increases the debt load of families even while receiving a subsidy with consequences for parents' ability to become self-sufficient. The inability to pay for care restricts child care options.**

Scott and colleagues report that parents perceive child care costs as changing and unpredictable. We have multiple perspectives on how much child care costs fluctuate for parents on subsidy. In the qualitative study parents report substantial and changing costs. Almost two-thirds of telephone survey respondents report that their costs did not fluctuate over the last three months. Analyzing the administrative data of these same parents shows substantial fluctuation, especially in provider payments and hours billed. The differences in responses may be due to differences in time frames. Parents in the qualitative study were describing changes over the last two years, survey parents were reporting changes in the last three months, and administrative data covers up to four years. Another possible reason for differences in perspective relates to the parents tolerance for unpredictability. Given the high level of work schedule unpredictability that many parents experience, changes in provider hours and child care costs may not receive much notice. **Policy revisions that limit copays to less than 10% of household income and make them more stable would decrease the cost burden and increase cost predictability.**

Findings from the telephone survey confirm Scott and colleagues conclusion that the subsidy program is a major work support for low-wage workers. In addition, the telephone survey documents that subsidy use affects parents' child care decisions. Subsidy receipt increases parent options and affects the child care decisions they make. Parents with a subsidy rank education and skill of the provider and supporting children's learning highly whereas these items are not ranked in the top five reasons that nonsubsidized providers are selected. Subsidized providers are much more likely to be centers or regulated nonrelative caregivers than are nonsubsidized providers. Subsidy receipt supports both employment and child care decisions.

An important future question is whether the link between receiving a subsidy and looking for providers that will support learning and development found in this study can be confirmed in other studies. Another potentially interesting research direction we intend to pursue is to delve deeper into multi-level analyses that take into account child, family, and community characteristics. These questions include: how work

constraints predict child care usage and child care selection; how does fluctuation in child care costs affect decisions about child care arrangements, employment, and other family management decisions; and does child care usage influence fluctuation in child care costs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: SPI Study Telephone Survey Instrument

INTRODUCTION

Hello, may I please speak with: <FNAME><LNAME>?

My name is (name) for Oregon State University. We are conducting a research study for Oregon State University about the state's child care subsidy program and how well it serves families who receive subsidies. You have been selected for this study because you received a child care subsidy from the Oregon Department of Human Services in December 2009. We would like to talk with you for approximately 20 minutes. We know that your time is very valuable. We would like to offer you a \$15 thank you if you complete the survey. We would send out the money to you by regular mail. Is this a good time for us to talk with you? If not, when may we call you?

[ALL R'S] This interview is completely voluntary. While parts of this interview may be monitored by my supervisor, your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your ability to receive a child care subsidy. Information about who participated will not be shared with DHS. If you have any questions about this survey I can answer them now or I can provide you a telephone number to call to get more information. The interview will take about 20 minutes to complete. You may choose to skip any question or end the interview at any time – just let me know. Okay?

CONTINUE WITH INTERVIEW
CONSENT NOT GIVEN -> TERMINATE

A. CHILD AND HOUSEHOLD ROSTER

A1. Can you please tell me the first names of all of the children under 13 who usually live in your household? It may help you to start with the youngest person.

First names: 1. _____
2. _____ etc. [cap at 10 children]

[INTERVIEWER: ASK A2a-A2e ABOUT EACH CHILD LISTED IN A1.]

A2a. [ASK IF NECESSARY] Is (CHILD) a boy or a girl?

1. Boy
2. Girl

A2b. In what month and year was (CHILD) born?

_____Month _____Year

A2c. What is (CHILD's) relationship to you?

1. Son or daughter (biological or adopted)
2. Stepson or stepdaughter
3. Brother or sister
4. Grandchild
5. Foster child
6. Other relative (e.g., niece or nephew)
7. Other nonrelative

A2d. Does (CHILD) have a physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that affects the way you provide care for him/her?

1. Yes
2. No

A3. These next questions are about your family and the other people who live in your household and are 13 years old or older. Please tell me the first names or initials of the teenagers and adults who usually live here.

[IDENTIFY ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS FIRST, THEN ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH PERSON.]

First names: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____ etc. [cap at 10 family members]

Now I have some questions about each person over age 13 in the household. Let me start with you.

A4a. How old is []? [IF NEEDED: Your best guess is fine]

Age _____

A4b. Is [] male or female?

1. Male
2. Female

A4c. What is your relationship to []?

1. Spouse (i.e., legally married)
7. Partner (i.e., not legally married)
2. Parent or parent-in-law
3. Child
4. Sibling or sibling-in-law
5. Other relative
6. Non-relative: (specify: _____)

[ASK A4a-A4c ABOUT ALL REMAINING INDIVIDUALS IN HH]

B. EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS

B1a. Now I'm going to ask you about your current work situation. Last week, did you do any work for pay?

[PROBE IF NEEDED: Please include freelance work, work in the military, work for a family-owned business even if you did not get paid, or work on your own business or farm.]

1. Yes
2. No

B1b. Last week, were you enrolled in a high school, college, or university?

1. Yes, enrolled
2. No, not enrolled

B1c. Last week, were you in a job training program? [PROBE: designed to help people find a job, improve their job skills, or learn a new job]

1. Yes, in training
2. No, not in training

[If B1a=1 THEN ASK B1d_1 – B1d_2a; OTHERWISE GO TO C1]

B1d. Next, I'd like to ask you about your day-to-day work schedule last week.

B1d_1. What time did you begin work on last Monday?

Time _____ [99 Did not work]

B1d_2. What time did you end work last Monday?
Time _____

B1d_2a. Did you work another shift or job on Monday?
1. Yes GO TO B1d_1
2. No

B1d_3. How many minutes did you spend commuting to work on Monday?
Minutes _____

[CHECKS TO PICK UP INCONSISTENCIES]
IF SUM OF WORK HOURS MORE THAN 50, GO TO CHK1 IF B1a=1 ONLY.

CHK1. The computer shows that you worked more than 40 hours last week. Is that correct?
1. Yes, correct
2. No, incorrect GO TO B1d_1

B2. [FOR TUESDAY TO SUNDAY SCHEDULES]. Now, I'd like to ask about your work schedule for last (Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday). Was that day's schedule the same as another day you've already told me about?
1. Yes (ASK B2a)
2. No (ASK B1d_1)

B2a. What day last week is the same as your (DAY OF WEEK) schedule last week?
1. Monday (ASK B3)
2. Tuesday (ASK B3)
3. Wednesday (ASK B3)
4. Thursday (ASK B3)
5. Friday (ASK B3)
6. Saturday (ASK B3)
7. No identical day already reported (ASK B1d_1)

B3. Usually, how many days in advance do you know your work schedule?
Days _____ [INTERVIEWER: ENTER 999 IF SCHEDULE IS ALWAYS THE SAME]

B4. Now I'm going to read three statements regarding how much you are able to count on the number of hours you will be working week-to-week. Please tell me how much you agree with the following statements. Your answer choices are strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree:
a. You can easily anticipate what days and times you'll be working week-to-week?
b. Most weeks, you can count on getting the number of hours you want?
c. Most weeks, you can count on working the days and shifts you want?

B5. I'm going to read a few statements about the flexibility you have in your work and family situation. Your answer choices are never, sometimes, often or always.
a. How often does your shift and work schedule cause extra stress for your work and family situation?
b. How often where you work is it difficult to deal with child care problems during working hours?
c. How often is your work schedule flexible enough to handle family needs?

C. CHILD CARE: ARRANGEMENTS AND TYPES

C1. [READ FOR FIRST CHILD ONLY] Next I have some questions about various people who looked after your child/children during the last week (that is, FILL IN DATES FOR LAST MONDAY AND LAST SUNDAY). In addition to a child's parents, a child may be cared for by other adults in the household, by other relatives or friends, or by a child-care provider in a center or someone's home.

C1a. [Let's start with the youngest child (CHILD)./Now let's talk about (CHILD2/etc.)] Please tell me all of the people or organizations that looked after him/her last week, other than you. [LIST ALL PROVIDERS CARING FOR CHILD LAST WEEK. LIST ALREADY INCLUDES R, AND 'CHILD HIM/HERSELF'.] [IF (CHILD) AGE 5 YEARS OR MORE, ALSO READ:] If (CHILD) also attended a before or after-school program, either at the school or somewhere else, please mention that program separately.

C1b. Please tell me whether this care usually takes place in your home or somewhere else.

Provider	Usual location of care	
1. _____	1. R's home	2. Other
2. _____	1. R's home	2. Other
3. _____	1. R's home	2. Other [Up to 5 providers]

C1c. Is (PROVIDER) paid by DHS or/the state for the care of (CHILD)?

1. Yes
2. No

[IF (CHILD) AGE 5 YEARS OR MORE AND THEY HAVE NO ONE LOOKING AFTER THEM BEFORE OR AFTER-SCHOOL ASK C1d; OTHERWISE GO TO C2]

C1d. What did (CHILD) do after school?

1. Parent is home with the child
2. Older child stays home to watch child
3. Child cares for self
4. Child cares for younger siblings
5. Other, please specify: _____

C2. Now I'd like to understand your child care schedule last week. Thinking about last Monday (that is, FILL IN THE DATE FOR LAST MONDAY), other than you (and your [spouse/partner]) who else looked after (CHILD)? [INTERVIEWER: SELECT PROVIDER FROM LIST CREATED IN C1b]. [IF NEEDED:] Please tell me about last week, even if it was an unusual week. I'll ask you other questions about your usual schedule later on.

C2a. [ASK THIS QUESTION ABOUT LAST MONDAY SCHEDULE] What time **last Monday** did (PROVIDER) start to look after (CHILD)?

_____Time

C2b. When did the care with (PROVIDER) end on **last Monday**?

_____Time

C2c_1. [FOR TUESDAY TO SUNDAY] Now I'd like to ask about (CHILD)' schedule for last (Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday). Was that day's schedule the same as the schedule for another day you've already told me about?

1. Yes (ASK C2c_2)
2. No (ASK FOR FULL DAY'S SCHEDULE)

C2c_2. What day last week was the same as (CHILD)'s (DAY OF WEEK) schedule last week?

1. Monday (SKIP TO NEXT DAY OF WEEK IN C2a)
2. Tuesday (SKIP TO NEXT DAY OF WEEK IN C2a)
3. Wednesday (SKIP TO NEXT DAY OF WEEK IN C2a)
4. Thursday (SKIP TO NEXT DAY OF WEEK IN C2a)
5. Friday (SKIP TO NEXT DAY OF WEEK IN C2a)
6. Saturday (SKIP TO NEXT DAY OF WEEK IN C2a)
7. No identical day already reported (ASK FOR FULL DAY'S SCHEDULE)

RE-ASK C2 UNTIL ALL PROVIDERS ASKED ABOUT FOR LAST WEEK FOR THIS CHILD.

C3. Does anyone else regularly look after (CHILD), even if they didn't happen to care for him/her last week? By regularly I mean at least five hours each week.

1. Yes GO TO C4
2. No GO TO C5
3. Don't Know GO TO C5
4. Refused GO TO C5

C4a. Who usually looks after (CHILD) but didn't do so last week?

C4b. Does that care usually take place at your home or somewhere else?

C4c. How many hours per week does (PROVIDER) usually care for (CHILD)?

Provider _____ Location _____ Hours _____

[RETURN TO C2 AND COLLECT FULL CHILD-CARE SCHEDULE LAST WEEK FOR NEXT CHILD, THEN FOR EACH CHILD UNTIL ALL CHILDREN UNDER 13 ASKED ABOUT. PARENT CAN REPORT THAT CHILD A'S SCHEDULE IS ESSENTIALLY LIKE CHILD J'S. THEN INTERVIEWER WILL CONFIRM EACH LINE OF THE SCHEDULE TABLE, EMPHASIZING 'LAST WEEK'.]

C5. Now I have a few more questions about each person/organization that looks after your child/children. [LOOP THROUGH EACH PROVIDER (LAST WEEK AND REGULAR) FOR EACH CHILD. ASK ONLY ONCE ABOUT EACH PROVIDER, REGARDLESS OF HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE CARED FOR BY THAT PROVIDER.]

C5a. [IF NOT OBVIOUS] Is (PROVIDER) an individual or an organization?

1. Individual GO TO C5b
2. Individual with family day care GO TO NEXT PROVIDER
3. Organization GO TO NEXT PROVIDER

C5b. Is (PROVIDER) male or female?

1. Male
2. Female

C5c. Did you have a personal relationship with (PROVIDER) before s/he began caring for your child/children?

1. Yes
2. No

C5c_1. What is your relationship to (PROVIDER)?

1. Former spouse/partner GO TO C5D
2. Child/Son/Daughter-in-Law GO TO C5D
3. Brother or sister or brother or sister-in-law GO TO C5D
4. Other relative GO TO C5D
5. Friend GO TO C5D
6. Neighbor GO TO C5E

C5d (IF NOT OBVIOUS) Does this individual live in this household?

1. Yes
2. No

C5e. Does (PROVIDER) usually care for children from other families while caring for your child/children? [DON'T COUNT HIS/HER OWN CHILDREN IF THEY ARE AROUND AS WELL.]

1. Yes
2. No

Now we are going to talk about why you chose (PROVIDER) to look after your child/children. First, we are going to ask what you thought was important for making child care work for your family and what you thought was important for your child.

C5f_1. When thinking about what was important for making child care work for your family, what was the most important reason from the following statements [READ ALL STATEMENTS; SELECT MOST IMPORTANT]

- a. Cost
- b. Convenient location (e.g. close to home or work)
- c. Flexible hours (e.g., hours fit my work/school schedule)
- d. Will accept subsidy – payment from state
- e. Was available
- f. Will care for all of my children who need care
- g. Other (specify): _____

C5f_2. When thinking about what you wanted for your child/children, what was the most important reason from the following statements? [READ ALL STATEMENTS; SELECT MOST IMPORTANT]

- a. Helps child/children do well in school
- b. Safe/healthy/clean
- c. Trustworthy
- d. Number of children with caregiver
- e. Education and skill of caregiver
- f. Shares my values
- g. Other (specify): _____

[GO TO NEXT PROVIDER]

D. EXTENT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND PERCEIVED STRESS

D1. The next set of questions asks about the type of support you may or may not have in your life. The answer choices are true, not true, not sure.

1. If I needed to borrow \$25, there is someone I could turn to.
2. If I were sick, I could easily find someone to help me with my daily chores.
3. If I was stranded 10 miles from home, there is someone I could call who could come and get me.
4. If I needed help in moving to a new house or apartment, I would have a hard time finding someone to help me.
5. If I needed someone to watch my child/children for a few hours, I could easily find someone.

D2a-d. For each question, please tell me how often you have felt or thought this way over the course of the last month. Your answer choices are very often, fairly often, sometimes, almost never, or never:

- a. How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
- b. How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
- c. How often have you found that things were going your way?
- d. How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

E. SUBSIDY SCREENER

E1. Are you currently getting help from the state (i.e., DHS) in paying for child care?

1. Yes GO TO F1
2. No

E2. What was the last month you received a subsidy? GO TO G1

F. COST BURDEN QUESTIONS WHEN RECEIVING A SUBSIDY

F1. A subsidy from DHS often does not cover all child care costs. I am going to read you a list of fees and charges you may have paid in the last three months. For each one, please tell me whether or not you have paid this fee or charge. Have you paid; [1. Yes, 2. No]

- a. A co-pay [i.e., the amount the state says you have to pay provider]
- b. The difference between what the state will pay for child care and what the provider charges (i.e., provider charges more than state will pay her)
- c. Provider fees – diapers, food, registration, supplies
- d. Late fees
- e. Extra money to provider for special work or help
- f. More hours than child is in care because provider charges for a block of time and not hourly
- g. All hours of child care for your children because the provider is not approved to receive DHS payment or refuses to get approved
- h. Hours of care while issues with DHS paperwork were being resolved
- i. Hours beyond those approved by DHS (i.e., travel time to work, unpaid lunch break)
- j. Hours not approved during school breaks such as teacher conference days, holidays, or snow days
- k. Hours not approved and spent looking for work
- l. Hours not approved and spent going to school
- m. Other charges? (Specify: _____)

F1a. How much did you pay out-of-pocket for child care last month for all of your children under the age of 13?
\$ _____ [CONFIRM THAT THIS AMOUNT IS BASED ON ALL CHILD/REN <13]

F1b. How much was your copay last month?? [IF NEEDED, the amount the state says you have to pay provider]
\$ _____

F2. Has the amount of money you paid out-of-pocket for child care expenses increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the last three months?

1. Increased GO TO F3
2. Stayed the same GO TO F5
3. Decreased GO TO F6

F3. Why did your out-of-pocket expenses for child care increase in the last three months? [READ ALL]
[1. Yes, 2. No]

- a. Changes in earnings because of increased hours worked or working two jobs
- b. Received child support
- c. Children getting older and not qualifying for subsidy assistance
- d. Increased child care hours used that weren't covered by DHS (school breaks, doctor appointments)
- e. Provider increased their payment rate
- f. Changes in child care arrangement
- g. Added adult to the household
- h. Other (Specify: _____)

F4. I am going to read you a list of things you might have done to help manage this increase in child care costs. For each item, tell me whether or not this was something that you did. Did you: [1. Yes, 2. No]

- a. Pay less on some other bills
- b. Create a payment plan with provider (paying more next month or using taxes to complete payments)
- c. Rely on tax returns to cover debts
- d. Borrow money from relatives/friends
- e. Take care of a friends/relatives child/ren in exchange for care for own child/ren
- f. Work longer hours or get additional shifts
- g. Use credit cards
- h. Use payday loans
- i. Reduce your food budget; spend less on food
- j. Postpone buying clothes
- k. Postpone medical care, filling prescription drugs, or getting dental care

- l. Have less entertainment
- m. Move in with friends or relatives
- n. Send one or more of your children to live with someone else
- o. Other (Specify: _____)

[GO TO F7]

F5. How long has your out-of-pocket expenses for child care been the same?
 _____ Months [GO TO F7]

F6. Why did your out-of-pocket expenses for child care decrease in the last three months? [READ ALL]

[1. Yes, 2. No]

- a. Changes in earnings because of decreased hours worked or working less jobs
- b. Decreased child care hours used that weren't covered by DHS (school breaks, doctor appointments)
- c. Changes in who looks after your child
- d. Decrease in provider fees
- e. Other (Specify: _____)

F7. In the last three months, have your earnings decreased because...[1. Yes, 2. No]

- a. You could not work because you had to look after your child/ren when they were sick or not able to go to school for some other reason
- b. You could not work because your provider fell through and you needed to stay home to look after your child/ren

F8. What would you do without subsidy assistance from DHS? [OPEN-ENDED]

G. COST BURDEN QUESTIONS WHEN PARENTS ARE NOT RECEIVING A SUBSIDY

G1. Why did you stop receiving a subsidy/state assistance for child care? [OPEN-ENDED] [INTERVIEWER SELECT ONE OR MORE RESPONSES BASED ON OPEN-ENDED; PROBE FROM LIST IF NEEDED TO CLARIFY RESPONSE]

- 1. Job loss
- 2. Earnings increased my household income beyond the income eligibility limit
- 3. Getting married increased household income beyond the income eligibility limit
- 4. Other income such as receiving child support increased household income beyond the income eligibility limit
- 5. Household income increased so the copay is greater than what the state would pay my provider
- 6. Household income increased so the amount received was not worth it
- 7. Missed recertification (i.e., failed to file mandatory paperwork)
- 8. Lost eligibility because they became self-employed
- 9. Lost eligibility because they (the parent) are going to school
- 10. Provider will not work with the subsidy program
- 11. Discouraged/gave up/too much hassle
- 12. Decided didn't want/need help from government
- 13. Other (Specify: _____)

G2a. Did the person/people who looked after your child/ren change when you stopped receiving your subsidy?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No GO TO G4

G2b. What changed?

[OPEN-ENDED]

G2c. Would you have made this change if you still had a subsidy?

1. Yes [ASK WHY?]
2. No [ASK WHY NOT?]

G3. IF B1a=1 or B1b=1 or B1c=1 GO TO G4; OTHERWISE SKIP TO G6

G4. Please tell us if you have paid for any of the following since not having a subsidy. Have you paid; [1. Yes, 2. No]

- a. Hours of care while working
- b. Mandatory provider fees – diapers, food, registration, supplies
- c. Late fees
- d. Extra money to provider for special work or help (i.e., tipping)
- e. More hours than child is in care because provider charges for a block of time and not hourly
- f. Hours of care while looking for work
- g. Hours of care while going to school
- h. Hours of care during school breaks, such as teacher conference days, holidays, or snow days
- i. Other charges? (Specify: _____)

G5. How much did you pay out-of-pocket for child care last month for all of your children under the age of 13?
\$_____ [CONFIRM THAT THIS AMOUNT IS BASED ON ALL CHILD/REN <13]

[SKIP TO H1 IF B1a-B1c ARE ALL NO RESPONSES]

G6. Did you do any of the following to manage your child care costs when you stopped receiving your subsidy assistance? [1. Yes, 2. No] [READ ALL]

- a. Rely on family and friends to look after child/ren
- b. Take care of a friends/relatives child/ren in exchange for care for own child/ren
- c. Created a payment plan with provider
- d. Work longer hours or get additional shifts
- e. Reduced hours or shifts
- f. Pay less on some bills
- g. Rely on tax returns to cover debts
- h. Borrow money from relatives/friends
- i. Use credit cards or payday loans
- j. Postpone buying clothes
- k. Postpone medical care, filling prescription drugs, or getting dental care
- l. Moved in with friends or relatives
- m. Send one or more of your children to live with someone else

H. DEMOGRAPHIC/SOCIO-ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

Next I'd like to learn a little more about you and your household. Questions include education, current living arrangements, whether they own or car or have access to one, income, and ethnicity.

I. PARENT CONSENT TO ACCESS ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

II. Oregon State University requests your permission to search child-care related government program records for information about the child care services and subsidies that your family received. We would not provide the state agency with any of the answers you've told me today, other than your name and the name(s) of your child/ren, and enough information to find your data in state records.

All information about you and your child is held in strict confidence and used for study purposes only. Any names of children, as well as your own name, will not be used in reporting the study results. We will never release any information that may identify you or your child.

1. Continue GO TO I2
2. Respondent still refuses GO TO I4

I2. [CAPTURE INTERVIEWER ID UPON ENTERING QUESTION J3]

I3. Do we have your permission to search state government child-care subsidy records, give the state agency basic information that identifies you and your child/ren, and request that information relevant to your receipt of child care subsidies be sent to Oregon State University for study purposes only?

1. Yes
2. No

I4. Thank you very much for speaking with me today. We appreciate your completing the interview and I would like to verify your address so that we can send you \$15 to thank you for your cooperation. (I have your mailing address as...)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Appendix B. Total Sample Disposition for Telephone Survey Data Collection

	Center	Nonrelative home based	Relative home based	Overall
(A) Completed interview	214	193	173	580
(B) Partially completed interview	6	6	2	14
(C) Refusals	6	9	9	24
(D) Language barrier	3	8	12	23
(E) Unable to reach	363	377	369	1109
Always busy	4	4	5	13
No answer	13	18	15	46
Telephone answering machine	282	276	252	810
Left answering message	21	17	29	67
Contacted, but status unresolved	26	48	48	122
Telecommunication tech barriers	10	10	13	33
Respondent Never Available	7	4	7	18
(F) Non-working numbers	82	96	104	282
Disconnected	39	45	47	131
Wrong number	29	37	47	113
Missing phone number	3	1	0	4
Call cannot be completed as dialed	11	13	10	34
(G) Electronic devices (e.g., fax machines)	2	1	1	4
(H) Ineligible	0	0	0	0
Total Sample	676	690	670	2036
Response Rate	37.2%	33.6%	31.0%	33.9%
Cooperation Rate	97.3%	95.7%	95.1%	96.1%

Appendix C. Descriptive Comparisons Between Administrative Data Samples (last month of last observed subsidy spell)

Variable	A All New Entries to Subsidy Program 10/2005 – 9/2009 (N=41,402)			B Telephone Survey Initial Sample of Stable Subsidy Recipients (N=4,551)			C Telephone Survey Completed Interviews – Respondents Who Gave Permission to View Administrative Records (N=528)		
	Mean/ Frequency	Std. Dev	Range	Mean/ Frequency	Std. Dev	Range	Mean/ Frequency	Std. Dev	Range
Number of children in household	1.79	0.95	0-10	2.03	1.04	0-8	1.86	0.96	0-6
Number of children with child care subsidy in household	3.06	1.10	1-11	3.25	1.21	2-11	3.07	1.11	2-8
Single parent households	92.3%			95.3%			95.3%		
Monthly household income	1009.94	829.1	0-5551	1272.78	843.3	0-4579	1235.75	879.62	0-4215
Employed (yes=1)	69.5%			80.0%			78.6%		
TANF (yes=1)	26.9%			17.2%			21.4%		
English is primary language (yes=1)	97%			97%			99.2%		
Parent's education level									
No formal schooling	<1%			<1%			<1%		
1-11 Grade completed	30.0%			27.5%			26.7%		
12 or GED	59.6%			61.9%			60.6%		
13-16 years of college	9.5%			9.7%			11.9%		
Credits toward post graduate deg.	<1%			<1%			-		
Race/Ethnicity of family									
Black	8.8%			9.1%			8.5%		
White	69.6%			63.3%			64.8%		
Hispanic	5.7%			2.0%			3.4%		
Asian	1.3%			1.4%			1.0%		
Native American	1.9%			1.3%			1.0%		
Other	0.8%			-			-		
Pacific Islander	0.3%			0.4%			0.4%		
Unknown ^a	11.7%			22.5%			21.0%		
Urban/Rural Classification									
Metropolitan	74.5%			76.6%			82.0%		
Micropolitan	21.7%			20.2%			16.1%		
Noncore	3.7%			3.2%			1.9%		

^a In April, 2007 there was a mass change made in the system that created a yes/no Hispanic field: indicate yes if the race field currently was coded Hispanic and then deleted the Hispanic code from the race field. The impact of the variable change is an increase in the race/ethnicity value “unknown” from 11.7% to 21.0%.

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