



Cultivating Connections...

Between Economic Development & Child Care

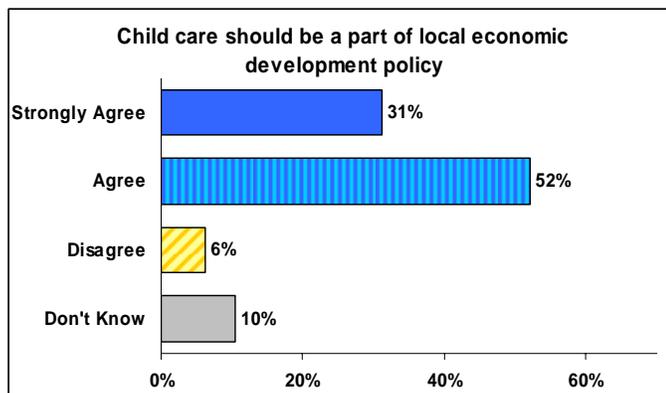
New York State Survey on Economic Development and Child Care

According to a 2006 survey of New York State's economic developers:

- 83% agree that childcare should be a part of economic development policy.
- 82% recognize that a lack of affordable, quality, convenient child care reduces worker productivity.
- 67% feel that businesses' ability to attract and retain workers is hurt by lack of quality child care.
- 58% acknowledge an inadequate supply of quality child care in their community.

In spring 2006, Cornell University conducted a survey of three hundred economic development professionals in New York State to explore the links between economic development and child care. Cornell University surveyed economic development agencies, Empire Zone coordinators, and Chambers of Commerce to determine how they perceive childcare as part of their economic development practice. The survey obtained a response rate of 32% with 97 respondents.

8 out of 10 economic development professionals believe that child care should be part of local economic development policy.

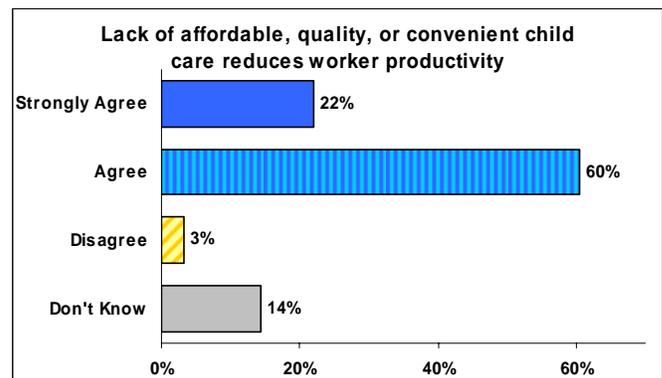


Eighty-three percent of economic development professionals believe that child care should be incorporated in local economic development practice, and 41% of the respondents state that they have already incorporated child care in their work. The Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce reports that incorporating child care in economic development is a major focus for the Chamber. Sixteen communities have identified child care as Empire Zone community development projects. Many respondents have used

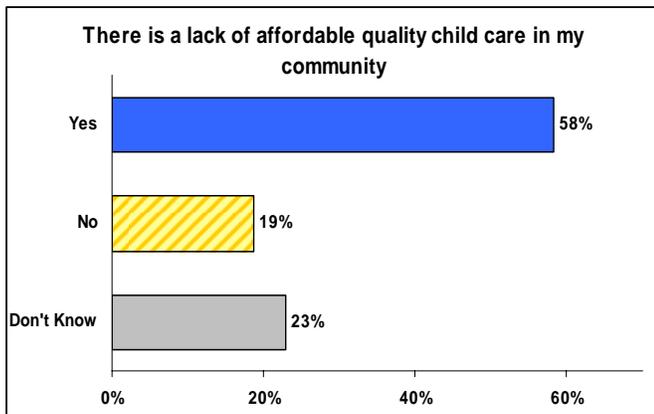
Community Development Block Grants or USDA Rural Development funds to help finance childcare.

Over eighty percent of economic development professionals agree that affordable, quality, and convenient care can boost worker productivity.

Availability of quality, affordable, and convenient child care is a key concern for parents and their employers. When such care is unavailable, worker productivity and retention suffer. Economic development professionals in New York State recognize that an increased supply of convenient, quality, affordable care during traditional and non-traditional hours is important for New York's economic productivity.

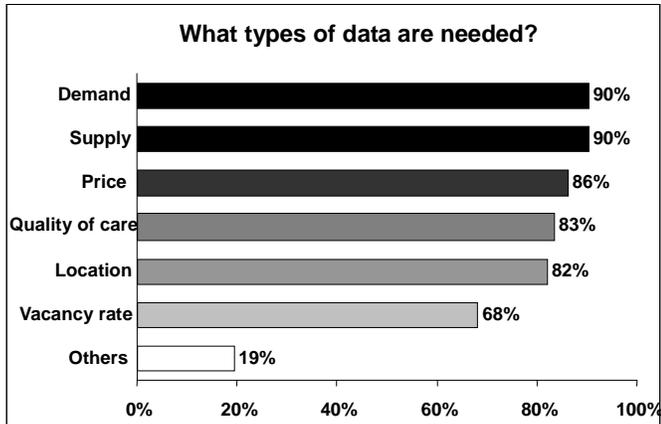


More than half (58%) of survey respondents agree that there is a lack of affordable quality child care in their communities. Only 10% of respondents state that quality, affordable care is available in their community at non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends). This is an especially important problem given job growth in sectors that require non-traditional hours (retail, services).



Better data is needed to link child care with economic development.

A quarter of respondents did not know whether quality affordable child care was available in their community, and half did not know whether quality affordable care was available on evenings or weekends. Three out of four respondents recognize the need for better data on child care for economic development planning. Economic developers are most interested in data on supply, demand, price and quality of care. Respondents also wanted data on child care for special needs children and funding sources for care services.

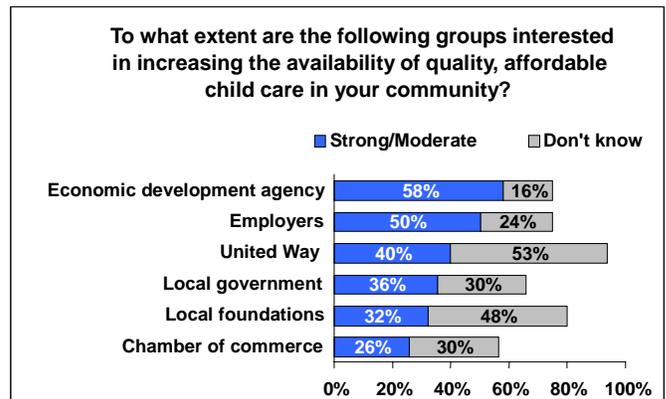


Public funding sources are currently underutilized

Many of the funding sources available for child care were underutilized in the majority of the surveyed areas. Although 90% of the respondents had empire zones in their areas, only 18% had certified child care as qualified Empire Zone enterprises. Only five respondents were aware that transportation funds could be used for planning and facilities development in child care. Local banks and credit unions have helped finance child care in one in four of responding communities. A number of communities in New York State reported using

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), USDA Rural Development funds, and tax credits to help finance child care. These funds were used to build child care centers as well as provide start up funds for family child care.

Partnerships strengthen the link between child care and economic development



Economic development professionals believe that economic development agencies and employers have the strongest interest in increasing the availability of quality, affordable child care. Although Chambers of Commerce, local foundations and United Ways are often leaders in community collaborations for child care, economic developers are not aware of their interest and involvement. There are many examples of public private collaborations for child care across the state (Corning, Ithaca, Buffalo, Rochester, and Long Island). This survey, makes clear the opportunity to reach out more to economic development and business leaders who have indicated they are ready and willing collaborators.

Economic developers recognize child care is a critical part of the social infrastructure for economic development in New York State. By cultivating connections between economic development and business leaders, child care providers and non-profit community leaders, New York State communities can enhance their investment in quality child care and their economic development futures. Increased communication among these groups will encourage collaboration to strengthen quality child care in NY communities.

Additional details on successful collaborations, the importance of planning and data collection, and the use of economic development funding can be found in the NYS Economic Development Issue Briefs available at <http://economicdevelopment.cce.cornell.edu>