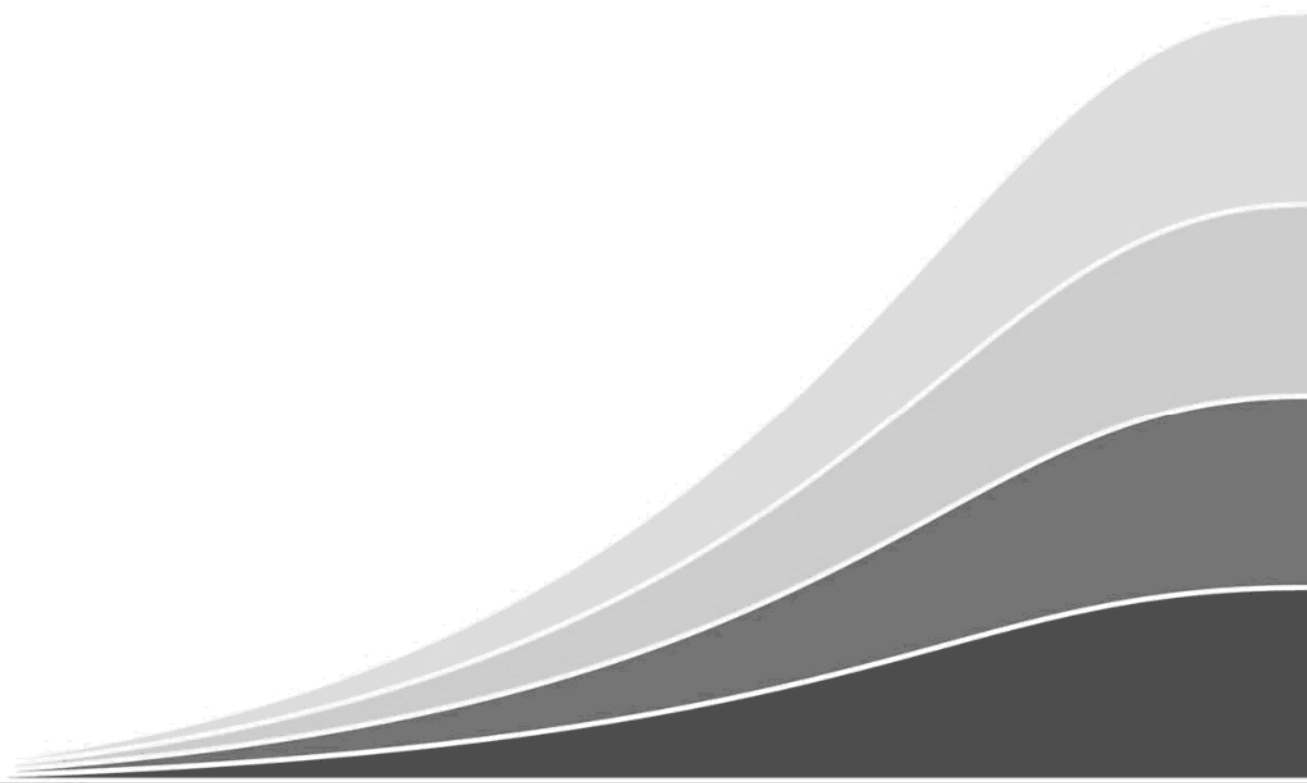


# Parent Child Care Survey 2015

PREPARED FOR MINISTRY OF CHILDREN & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
BY BC STATS – AUGUST 2015



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# 1. Executive Summary

On behalf of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), BC Stats conducted a telephone survey of 864 British Columbians in March 2015. This survey gathered information about parents' current child care arrangements, child care preferences, and access and barriers to locating and securing child care.

The information gathered in this research will play a fundamental role in assisting MCFD to more accurately and effectively inform government policy and program development throughout the province as related to building a sustainable and quality early years strategy to support B.C. families.

## 1.1. Key Findings

- Just over half of the respondents reported that they stay at home to care for their child or children (54%).
  - Of those, more than half stay at home because they believe it is the best for their child (56% of primarily stay at home parents; 30% of all respondents).
  - Fewer than two-in-ten stay at home because they “cannot afford child care costs” (16% of primarily stay at home parents; 9% of all respondents).
- The most commonly reported child care arrangement was care by a parent or guardian (sole care providers) (41% of all respondents).
  - The second-most-common care arrangement was provided by family members or relatives (63% of respondents using any form of care arrangement), followed by centre-based child care facilities (34%).
  - Of those who were not sole care providers, more than two out of three respondents (69%) used a single care arrangement; almost all of the remainder (29%) used two care arrangements.
- Four out of five respondents (80%) were satisfied with their current child care arrangements.
  - Quality (87%), location (85%), and facility and hours and days of operation (both 81%) were rated highest among all satisfaction factors.
  - The most important factors in choice of care arrangements were the location being close to home or work (76%), convenient hours/days of operation (72%), and affordability of child care fees (64%).

- Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) respondents were currently using their preferred child care arrangement.
  - Of those who were not currently using their preferred arrangement, more than four-in-ten (44%) would prefer a centre-based facility and 28% would prefer child care provided by themselves or by their spouse/partner.
  
- When asked about the challenges they faced in obtaining child care, two in five respondents (41%) said “child care costs are too expensive”.
  - Convenient hours/days of operation or flexibility was the second most frequent challenge (33%) followed by ‘location close to home not available’ (20%).
  
- Just over three-quarters of respondents (77%) did not have to wait before being offered a space in their current child care arrangements.
  - One in ten respondents (11%) were waitlisted while in immediate need of child care and another 12% were waitlisted, while not in immediate need.
  
- Word of mouth was the most popular source of child care arrangement information (64%).
  - Respondents used the child’s school (11%) to find about child care arrangements if word of mouth wasn’t their primary information source.
  
- One out of seven (14%) respondents reported receiving the child care subsidy.

## 2. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Parent Child Care Survey, administered by NRG Research Group and BC Stats in 2015 on behalf of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

### 2.1. Background

In March 2014, the Minister of Children and Family Development, Honourable Stephanie Cadieux, committed to engaging with parents<sup>1</sup> of children from birth to age 12 years about child care usage and needs in British Columbia.

Since the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) last conducted a provincial survey (in 2003), there have been many changes that may have affected child care usage and needs in the province. Influences such as ongoing societal changes and adjustments to government programs have motivated the pursuit for more up-to-date information.

The information gathered in this research project will play a fundamental role in assisting MCFD to more accurately and effectively inform government policy and program development throughout the province as related to building a sustainable quality early years strategy to support B.C. families. This research has gathered information about parents' current child care arrangements, child care preferences, barriers to locating and securing child care as well as awareness, use and satisfaction with current child care services and programs offered in B.C.

### 2.2. Research Objectives

Guided by the general purpose, the present study has the following objectives:

- Assess the child care needs of British Columbian families.
- Explore the diversity of parents' child care arrangements.
- Identify parents' child care preferences, and barriers to accessing child care.
- Evaluate the overall satisfaction with the current child care arrangements and specific child care attributes.
- Inform child care policy and program development to build a well-planned, quality child care system.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes guardians of children aged zero to 12.

## 2.3. Survey Methodology: Summary

The survey sample was drawn from a random selection of British Columbia households, and screened to include only those households with at least one child between the ages of birth and 12 years of age.

A total of 864 British Columbia residents completed the survey.

Further details regarding the survey methodology can be found in section 7. Methodology.

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*The results are based on the responses of 864 British Columbia parents and guardians.*

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### 3. Care Arrangements

All respondents to the survey were asked about their primary child care arrangements (staying at home with the child or not), followed by the range of child care arrangements that they use and details about that care. These questions were then followed by enquiries about satisfaction with their current child care arrangements, their needs, and perceived barriers to meeting those needs.

#### 3.1. Staying at home to care for children

Just over half of all respondents reported they stay at home to care for their child or children (54%).

When asked for the primary reason that they stay at home to care for their child, more than half (56%) said it is because they believe it is the best for their child. Fewer than two-in-ten (16%) reported staying at home because they cannot afford child care costs.

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*Just over half of all survey respondents stay home primarily to care for their children.*

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**TABLE 1. REASONS FOR STAYING HOME TO CARE FOR CHILDREN**

Do you or your spouse/partner stay at home primarily in order to care for your child/children? (% yes)	% of All Respondents	% of Parents who stay at home primarily to care for their child or children
	54%	100%
What is the main reason that you or your spouse/partner stays at home to care for your child/children?	% of All Respondents	% of Parents who stay at home primarily to care for their child or children
Believe it is best for the child/children	30%	56%
Cannot afford child care costs	9%	16%
Are on maternity or parental leave	5%	9%
Work from home		3%
Cannot find suitable child care arrangements	1%	3%
Cannot find inclusive child care arrangements for children with special needs	1%	2%
Other	8%	10%

Base: All respondents, n = 864; Parents who stay at home, n = 470.

FIGURE 1. REASONS FOR STAYING AT HOME TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

