



# Texas Rising Star

# Survey Report



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# INTRODUCTION

## Executive Summary

The Texas Rising Star program may currently lag in awareness and recognition among Texas families, but the survey demonstrates affinity can be cultivated through relatively straightforward explanations of the Texas Rising Star program. Families are seeking information and make decisions based on factors consistent with how Texas Rising Star measures quality, and families will benefit from opportunity to access financial assistance through their local Workforce Boards.

There are still many challenges. Throughout the survey, there are important differences in perception, awareness, and decision making based on respondent race, income, region, and education.

Respondents with lower levels of education and income are more likely to care for their children at home, and are more focused on financial and logistical factors like affordability, location, and flexibility. These respondents cannot afford professional care, struggle to find placement convenient to where they live, and need more flexibility to accommodate work and life schedules.

Conversely, respondents with higher levels of income and educational attainment are more likely to have their children placed in a formal child care setting and are less likely to utilize public resources to gather information and make decisions.

In addition, families whose children require specialized care are struggling to find available and affordable child care, and these challenges are exacerbated by race, education, language, and income.

The pivot point for families in making decisions about child care is whether they can access relevant and reliable information. The survey demonstrates many Texas families do not access information through their Workforce Boards and are unfamiliar with the tools provided or shared by the Texas Workforce Commission and other partner agencies (e.g., the Texas Child Care Availability Portal) to help make child care decisions. Families do rely on word of mouth, online reviews of child care programs, social media, and information from state licensing.

Most Texas families with young children want or need child care. They want to make sure their children are safe, and in nurturing environments managed by credentialed staff. They also need access to financial supports (when eligible) to help cover the expenses of formal child care programs. All of this falls within the Texas Rising Star mission, and places Texas Rising Star at the mesh point of what families need and what child care programs need to offer.

The good news is Texas Rising Star has a story to share – one which serves the interests of Texas families. The next steps are to share this story with the families who need to hear it, because once they do learn about what the Texas Rising Star program is, and what the program can do to help them, they quickly get on board.

The movement in the survey is significant. After hearing about the Texas Rising Star program – how it measures quality, and provides information and support to families – three out of four respondents say they will use the Texas Rising Star program to identify high-quality child care programs near where they live, and a similar number say they will use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance opportunities to support their child care needs.

Providing families with factual and effective information – content in the context appropriate to the audience – will quickly improve awareness of and appreciation for Texas Rising Star among the families Texas Rising Star is intended to serve.

## **Background**

Texas Rising Star is the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) for child care programs in Texas. Managed by the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Rising Star offers three levels of quality certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage child care and early learning programs to attain progressively higher levels of quality. These certification levels are tied to incrementally enhanced reimbursement rates for children receiving child care scholarships.

In 2021, the Texas Legislature required all Child Care Services (CCS) regulated providers to participate in Texas Rising Star. CCS providers must have at least an Entry Level Designation; which allows them to operate for up to two years until they must achieve at least a Two-Star certification.

To raise awareness, educate, and inspire action around high-quality child care for diverse audiences, the Texas Workforce Commission engaged in a comprehensive research project to identify opportunities to improve the quality of child care across Texas.

The research project started with a landscape analysis to identify common and best practices among regional and peer QRIS programs. The landscape analysis examined the promotion and resource practices in Texas and 11 other states – mostly by reviewing the online presence and publicly available application and evaluation materials of the various agencies.

The research continued with in-depth interviews with key stakeholders who have roles within the Texas Rising Star program at the state and Board level or who serve as child care program directors or owners. These stakeholders shared their perspectives on how to identify and implement potential improvements in engagement and outreach for Texas Rising Star.

The next step was a more extensive set of qualitative focus groups with Texas Rising Star mentors and assessors, families, child care teachers, and directors or owners of child care programs. The focus groups findings identified potential improvements to the engagement and communications approaches of Texas Rising Star.

The final step in the research project is a statewide survey – the data for this report. By targeting families with children under six years old, the survey is designed to identify, evaluate, and measure the practices families use to consider their child care options, inquire how they gather information, and test whether Texas families can see Texas Rising Star as a valuable resource in making child care decisions.

## **Methodology**

Randomized calls were made using a commercially leased list of phone numbers for Texas residents. Once contacted, survey respondents were asked to confirm their status as Texas residents, and were further screened to be adults with children under the age of six living in their household.

1,243 responses were collected using professional live telephone interviewers from June 19 through June 30, 2023. 1,079 responses were in collected English, 164 in Spanish.

The margin of error is +/- 2.78 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means if the survey was run 100 times, 95 out of those 100 times, the results of the survey would be within 2.78 percent of each other.

### **Quality Control and Analysis**

In addition to live calls, nearly 50,000 text messages were sent, seeking to collect data for comparison purposes. 3,530 respondents initiated responses, with 49 completed surveys. A fuller analysis of the participation decay across the survey is contained in Appendix B – Summative Analysis.

### **Survey Logic**

The survey is divided into seven sections:

**Family Composition** – after screening to confirm Texas residency and the presence of a child under six years old in the household, respondents were asked to share the ages and numbers of children in the household, and the relationship of the respondent to the child.

**The Need for Specialized Care** – respondents were asked to share the whether any of their children under six has a condition requiring specialized care, what type of specialized care is needed, and the challenges they may encounter when seeking child care solutions for their child.

**Child Care Settings** – respondents were asked to share where and how they care for their child (in the home, through informal arrangements, or in a professional setting), how many days a week their child is in those child care settings, whether they offer compensation to those providing care in an informal setting, and for those who use care outside their home – how they get their child to the child care location.

**Making Child Care Decisions** – respondents were asked to rank the relative importance of seven factors as they make child care decisions – including operational, developmental, and financial considerations.

**Sources of Information** – respondents were asked to share how much they use different sources of information to research and understand their options when considering child care.

**Texas Rising Star** – respondents were asked to share if they had heard of Texas Rising Star, whether they have used it to identify child care options for their family, their opinions about different aspects of the Texas Rising Star program, and whether they would use Texas Rising Star to identify high-quality programs near where they live or to identify financial assistance options.

**Demographics** – respondents were asked to share demographic and geographic information to ensure data collection from a representative sample.



## KEY FINDINGS

The following pages share key findings from each section of the survey.

### Family Composition

- Across the 1,243 respondent households with children under six years of age, there are a total of 3,456 children under the age of 18, an average of nearly three children per household.
- 956 households have more than one child in the household, creating the potential need for more than one child care solution for the family or household.
- Respondents were asked to identify their relationship to the child or children under six years old in their household. A supermajority of 80.2 percent are the biological or adoptive parents of the child, 13.6 percent are grandparents, 2.4 percent are other relatives, and the remainder are foster, sibling, or non-relative relationships. Overall, 93.7 percent of respondents indicated a parent or grandparent relationship to the child.
- Only 19.2 percent of grandparents have a four-year degree or post-graduate study, compared to 34.2 percent of the overall sample; and 62.5 percent of grandparents earn less than \$60,000 a year, compared to 40.4 percent of the overall sample. 23.9 percent of Black respondents and 15.0 percent of Hispanic respondents are grandparents – greater than the 13.6 percent of grandparent respondents in the overall sample.
- As will be shown throughout the report, differences in educational attainment and household income correlate with how respondents view their options, prioritize information, and make decisions about child care. The households led by grandparents may therefore face greater challenges in accessing and using quality child care programs, and these families may need more support to learn how to access quality child care.

### The Need for Specialized Care

- 152 respondents (12.3 percent of the full sample) have a child with special needs or a condition requiring specialized care.
- The demographics of respondents indicating their child needs specialized care closely mirrors the demographics of the overall sample.
- Respondents shared more than 30 different descriptions of the conditions or specialized care needs their children require. Some children have more than one condition requiring specialized care.
- Autism and its therapy strategies were mentioned the most, followed by, speech therapy, ADHD, Asthma and other respiratory issues, and neurological conditions.
- Families face challenges in accessing specialized care. 55.5 percent cited costs as a challenge, 46.8 percent indicated the providers in their area did not have the proper training or experience to provide specialized care, 38.0 percent indicated the providers were not accepting new enrollments, and 4.2 percent indicated specialized services were not offered in their child’s language.

### Child Care Settings

- The child care landscape is more complex than three options (in-household child care, informal child care outside of household, or formal child care), and many families rely on a mix of solutions to meet their child care needs.



- Respondents were asked to share their child care routine for each child under six years old in their household during a typical week – and respondents could select more than one option.
  - 61.1 percent of respondents say the child was cared for by the respondent or another parent or guardian in the household, 25.8 percent say the child was cared for by another adult in the household, and 10.1 percent say the child was cared for by older siblings of the child in the household. Separately, 25.3 percent of respondents say the child was primarily cared for by relatives or friends outside the household, and 40.1 percent used a formal, child care professional in a center or home.
  - Among respondents 45 to 54 years old, there is a strong preference for in-household solutions (51.2 percent). These respondents are also least likely to use a formal child care setting (26.4 percent).
  - Hispanic respondents are the mostly likely to provide child care in their own home (60.7 percent), and the least likely to use a formal child care setting (31.5 percent).
- Household income is an important factor in how families access or use child care services. A majority of respondents earning under \$60,000 a year (59.5 percent) and between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (60.2 percent) use a home or family-centered child care solution, while a majority of respondents earning more than \$90,000 a year (51.3 percent) use a formal child care solution.
- Respondents with a four-year college degree, post-graduate work, or a post-graduate degree are more likely to use a formal child care solution (52.0 percent) than a home or family-centered child care solution (43.0 percent), and are least-likely to use an informal care setting (4.8 percent).
- 314 respondents (25.3 percent) use some form of informal child care arrangements.
  - 193 of the 314 respondents (61.5 percent) who use informal child care arrangements offer some form of compensation to the child care provider.
  - The families offering some form of compensation are more likely to be non-White. 72.2 percent of Black respondents and 71.2 percent of Hispanic respondents offer some form of compensation, while only 48.5 percent of White respondents offer compensation.
  - Household Income is again a factor. While similarly high levels of respondents with a household income less than \$60,000 a year (64.9 percent) or earning between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (65.4 percent) offer compensation to those providing informal child care, 53.8 percent of respondents earning more than \$90,000 a year provide compensation.
  - Respondents with a four-year college degree, post-graduate work, or a post-graduate degree (63.9 percent) are more likely to offer compensation to those providing informal child care.
  - A statistically robust 87.9 percent of respondents take their children to child care via car. For most Texans, driving is essential, with few respondents relying on other mobility solutions.

### **Making Child Care Decisions**

- Respondents consider many factors when choosing child care for their family. Respondents were asked to share whether they felt seven factors are very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

- How important is it for a child care program to be close to where you live or work? **[Proximity]**
- How important is affordability when choosing a child care program? **[Affordability]**
- How important is the flexibility of hours or days of operation when choosing a child care program? **[Flexible Hours]**
- How important is safety when choosing a child care program? **[Safety]**
- How important is it for a child care program to have a nurturing environment for your child/children? **[Nurturing Environment]**
- How important is it for a child care program to be able to help your child/children be ready to learn in school? **[Ready to Learn]**
- How important is it for a child care program to be able to teach your child/children how to get along with other children? **[Social Skills]**
- Each of the factors tested strongly as important, with all seven scoring at more than 90 percent when combining very important and somewhat important.
  - Safety is the top factor, at 98.2 percent important.
  - The child-centered factors – their safety, environment, and development (ready to learn and social skills) – matter slightly more to families than the financial or logistical considerations of affordability, flexible hours, or proximity.
  - With respondents placing high levels of importance on each factor, there are no significant or actionable variations across the racial, gender, age, education, income, or regional subgroups.
- Respondents were then asked to identify which of the seven factors they think is the most important. Safety is the top factor at 44.5 percent, followed by Affordability at 23.4 percent, a Nurturing Environment at 12.7 percent, Proximity at 6.4 percent, Ready to Learn at 5.6 percent, Social Skills at 3.8 percent, and Flexible Hours at 3.0 percent.
  - Respondents ages 18 to 34 are the most likely to identify Safety (53.1 percent), while respondents 55 years old and older are the most likely to identify Affordability (40.5 percent) as the most important factor.
  - While a plurality of all racial cohorts identify Safety as a the most important factor, White respondents are the least likely to identify Affordability (19.1 percent), and the most likely to identify a Nurturing Environment (18.0 percent) as important factors. Conversely, non-White respondents are more likely to identify Affordability as an important factor, with Black respondents the most likely (29.3 percent).
  - Respondents 55 years old and older are also the least likely to identify child-centered factors – Safety (30.7 percent) or a Nurturing Environment (9.1 percent) as the most important. These respondents seem more concerned with financial and logistical aspects. When combining Affordability, Proximity, and Flexible Hours, 50.6 percent of respondents 55 years old and older identify this combination of most important – a greater level than the other age cohorts, which combine in the mid-twenties to mid-thirties for these three factors.

### Sources of Information

- Respondents were asked to share how they used different sources of information to research and understand options when considering child care for their family. For each, respondents shared whether they rely on the source of information a lot, a little, or not at all.

- Respondents were presented with a randomized list of seven potential sources of information:
  - Word of mouth – information from friends and family [**Word of Mouth**]
  - Online reviews of child care programs [**Online Reviews**]
  - Comments and reviews on social media platforms [**Social Media**]
  - Tours of child care programs [**Site Tours**]
  - Licensing and regulation information [**Licensing Information**]
  - Texas Child Care Availability Portal [**Availability Portal**]
  - Information from local workforce boards [**Workforce Boards**]
- Respondents were most likely to use word of mouth (90.8 percent) as a source of information, followed by online reviews (85.8 percent), licensing information (81.2 percent), social media (80.1 percent), and tours of child care programs (80.0 percent).
  - There is a noticeable difference in usage of information from local Workforce Boards (51.7 percent) and the Texas Child Care Availability Portal (44.3 percent). This lack of usage also aligns with the qualitative research, where few participants had heard of Texas Rising Star, the Child Care Availability Portal, or were aware of the relationship of the Workforce Boards to Texas Rising Star or child care in general.
  - Respondents ages 18-34 are the most likely to use site tours (84.0 percent), but are the least likely to use the Texas Child Care Availability Portal (41.5 percent).
  - Respondents 55 years old and older are most likely to use licensing information (86.6 percent) and the Availability Portal (62.9 percent), but are the least likely to use site visits (72.6 percent) to inform their child care decisions.
  - White respondents are the most likely to use word of mouth (92.3 percent), but are the least likely to use information from Workforce Boards (36.7 percent), and the Availability Portal (28.9 percent).
  - Black respondents are among the most likely to use licensing information (86.1 percent).
  - Asian respondents are among the highest users of social media (91.4 percent) and the most likely to use site tours (91.1 percent).
  - Hispanic respondents are the most likely to use information from the Workforce Boards (66.3 percent) or the Availability Portal (59.8 percent).
  - Respondents with a household income of less than \$60,000 a year are less likely to use word of mouth (87.8 percent), social media (78.4 percent), or site tours (77.6 percent); but are the most likely to use information from Workforce Boards (65.8 percent) or the Availability Portal (60.7 percent).
  - Respondents earning more than \$90,000 are slightly more likely to use word of mouth information (92.7 percent), online review (86.9 percent) and social media (81.9 percent), but are the least likely to use information from the Workforce Boards (40.6 percent) or the Availability Portal (30.9 percent).

### Texas Rising Star

- Recognition of Texas Rising Star is low – 246 respondents (19.7 percent) say they have heard of Texas Rising Star, 935 respondents (76.1 percent) have not, and 51 respondents (4.1 percent) did not know or refused to answer.
  - Black respondents (27.3 percent) are the most likely to have heard about Texas Rising Star, and Asian respondents (5.2 percent) are the least likely. White respondents (20.4 percent)

- and Hispanic respondents (19.2 percent) are closer to the overall sample in terms of awareness and recognition.
- This low level of awareness and recognition contributes to an even lower rate of utilization. This low level of usage (69 respondents or 5.5 percent of the full sample) makes it very difficult to draw distinct demographic or geographic comparisons or conclusions.
  - All respondents were read a description of Texas Rising Star. After hearing this description, respondents were asked if they know a child care program is certified as a Texas Rising Star program, would their family travel further each day or be willing to pay a bit more to place them in a quality-rated program.
    - A majority of respondents (50.8 percent) are willing to travel further or to pay a bit more, 25.7 percent are not, while 23.5 percent are unsure.
    - Respondents 18 to 34 (52.6 percent), 35 to 44 (51.1 percent) and 45 to 54 (50.8 percent) are more willing to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program, while respondents 55 years old and older (43.2 percent) are less willing to travel further or pay more.
    - Asian respondents (56.0 percent) are more willing than White (49.9 percent), Black (51.2 percent), and Hispanic (51.1 percent) respondents to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program.
  - A plurality (48.5 percent) of respondents identify the quality of teacher-child interactions as the most important quality category, followed by the qualifications of the directors and teachers (27.2 percent), and an equal number of responses for how the program is managed (9.5 percent) and the quality of the indoor and outdoor environments (9.5 percent).
    - Across the age cohorts, respondents younger than 45 years old are more likely to identify the quality of teacher-child interactions as the most important category (53.8 percent for respondents 18-34 and 49.4 percent for respondents 35 to 44), while respondents ages 45 to 54 (42.5 percent) and respondents 55 years old and older (37.0 percent) rank teacher-child interactions as the most important, but at lower levels.
  - Respondents were asked how likely they would be to use the Texas Rising Star quality ratings to identify high-quality child care programs near where they work or live.
    - 75.8 percent of respondents will likely use Texas Rising Star to identify high-quality child care programs, while 17.3 percent will not. This figure – approximately three out of every four respondents – is consistent across all subgroups.
    - This uniformity indicates the exposure to the information presented throughout the survey has a consistently effective influence on whether respondents will use Texas Rising Star.
  - Respondents were asked if they would visit the Texas Rising Star website to learn more about financial assistance for child care services. 71.1 percent of respondents are likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs, while 24.6 percent are not.
    - Respondents ages 18 to 34 (73.1 percent) and respondents 55 years old and older are the most likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.
    - White respondents (61.3 percent) are the least likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs, while Black respondents (77.8 percent), Asian Respondents (76.9 percent), and Hispanic respondents (77.6 percent) are more likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

- Respondents with a household income of less than \$60,000 a year (81.1 percent) are more likely than respondents with a household income between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year to use Texas Rising Start to identify financial assistance programs, while respondents with a household income of \$90,000 or more a year (61.3 percent) are the least likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.



# SURVEY TOPLINE RESULTS

**Texas Statewide Child Care Survey**

**June 19 - 30, 2023**

**N = 1,243**

**Q1** Are you at least 18 years old and a resident of Texas?

100.0% Yes

**Q2** Our research is focusing on child care –are you the parent or immediate guardian of a child under six years old?

100.0% Yes

**Q3** If you don't mind – without using their names – can you tell us the ages of the children you are the parent or guardian of. For example, you may have two children, a boy who is seven, and a girl who is three. Please tell me the ages for each of the children under 18 in your household.

**Zero to 17 Months**

25.8% Yes

74.2% No

**18 Months to 2 Years**

30.2% Yes

69.8% No

**3 to 5 Years**

54.1% Yes

45.9% No

**6 to 9 Years**

31.3% Yes

68.7% No

**10 to 12 Years**

16.6% Yes

83.4% No

**13 Years or Older**

15.8% Yes

84.2% No

**Q4** What is the relationship of the child/children under six years old in your household to you?

80.2% Biological or adopted child

1.0% Sibling

13.6% Grandchild

1.2% Foster child

2.4% Other relative

0.9% Other non-relative

0.8% Don't know / Refused

**Q5** Do any of the children under 6 years of age in your household have any diagnosed special needs, a disability, or a chronic medical condition requiring specialized child care services?

12.3% Yes

87.5% No

0.2% Don't know / Refused

**Q6** What type of specialized care, if any, does your child need? **[OPEN-ENDED]**

**Q7** Has your child’s diagnosis made it more difficult to find child care? Please tell us whether you have encountered any or all of these challenges.

- 55.5% Costs for specialized care are too high
- 46.8% No providers in my area with proper training or experience in specialized care
- 38.0% Providers are not accepting new enrollments
- 4.2% Providers don't offer specialized care in my child's language

**Q8** In a typical week, what is your child care routine for your child/children under six years old? Are they...

- 61.1% Cared for by you or another parent or guardian in your household
- 25.8% Cared for by other adults in your household
- 10.1% Cared for by older siblings in your household
- 25.3% Informally cared for by relatives or friends outside your household
- 40.1% Formally cared for by a child care professional in a center or home
- 0.1% Don't know / Refused

**Q9** How many days a week do people in your household care for your child/children?

- 2.6% One day
- 11.6% Two days
- 3.1% Three days
- 3.5% Four days
- 9.2% Five days
- 1.5% Six days
- 68.6% Seven days

**Q10** How many days a week do relatives or friends care for your child/children?

- 21.5% One day
- 17.1% Two days
- 14.4% Three days
- 13.2% Four days
- 23.7% Five days
- 2.3% Six days
- 8.0% Seven days

**Q11** How many days a week do you have a child care center or child care home care for your child/children?

- 13.6% One day
- 3.1% Two days
- 6.0% Three days
- 3.7% Four days
- 68.7% Five days
- 2.2% Six days
- 2.7% Seven days

**Q12** When your child/children is informally cared for by people outside your household do they receive money for looking after them?

- 39.4% Yes
- 58.1% No
- 2.6% Don't know / Refused

**Q13** Do you give them anything other than money in exchange for caring for your child/children? For example, do you provide groceries or transportation, or do work such as caring for children or small repair jobs in exchange for the care they provide?

- 38.5% Yes
- 59.6% No
- 1.9% Don't know / Refused



**Q14** How do you usually take your child/children to your child care provider?

- 87.9% Car
- 1.8% Walking or bicycle
- 1.1% Public transportation
- 0.8% School bus
- 6.0% Other
- 2.4% Don't know / Refused

**These next questions are about how you important you think different factors are when choosing child care for your family. For each, tell us whether it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.**

**Q15** How important is it for a child care program to be close to where you live or work?

- 78.0% Very important
- 15.0% Somewhat important
- 2.6% Neither important nor unimportant
- 0.8% Somewhat unimportant
- 2.5% Not important at all
- 1.0% Don't know / Refused

**Q16** How important is affordability when choosing a child care program?

- 80.9% Very important
- 14.2% Somewhat important
- 1.8% Neither important nor unimportant
- 0.5% Somewhat unimportant
- 1.7% Not important at all
- 0.8% Don't know / Refused

**Q17** How important is the flexibility of hours or days of operation when choosing a child care program?

- 69.9% Very important
- 24.0% Somewhat important
- 2.9% Neither important nor unimportant
- 0.9% Somewhat unimportant
- 1.4% Not important at all
- 0.9% Don't know / Refused

**Q18** How important is safety when choosing a child care program?

- 97.4% Very important
- 0.8% Somewhat important
- 0.5% Neither important nor unimportant
- 0.9% Somewhat unimportant
- 0.8% Not important at all
- 0.5% Don't know / Refused

**Q19** How important is it for a child care program to have a nurturing environment for your child/children?

- 92.0% Very important
- 5.6% Somewhat important
- 0.8% Neither important nor unimportant
- 0.0% Somewhat unimportant
- 0.5% Not important at all
- 0.6% Don't know / Refused

**Q20** How important is it for a child care program to be able to help your child/children be ready to learn in school?

- 82.8% Very important
- 12.8% Somewhat important
- 2.3% Neither important nor unimportant
- 0.7% Somewhat unimportant
- 0.6% Not important at all
- 0.8% Don't know / Refused

**Q21** How important is it for a child care program to be teach your child/children how to get along with other children?

- 81.6% Very important
- 15.2% Somewhat important
- 1.4% Neither important nor unimportant
- 0.6% Somewhat unimportant
- 0.7% Not important at all
- 0.4% Don't know / Refused

**Q22** And when thinking about all of these factors, which is the most important to you?

- 44.5% Safety
- 23.4% Affordability
- 12.7% Nurturing environment
- 6.4% Location
- 5.6% School readiness
- 3.8% Helping children learn to get along
- 3.0% Flexibility of hours
- 0.6% Don't know / Refused

**Q23.** Other than the factors mentioned above, is there any other information you would like to share about your child care situation; or do you have other needs which may impact how you choose child care. For example, some families need child care for hours outside the normal work day or week, or some families may be looking for specific program offerings in a child care program. If you have anything else you would like to share about what you look for or need, please share it now. **[OPEN-ENDED]**

**Now I would like to ask about the sources of information you use or have used to research and understand your options when considering child care for your family. For each, tell me whether you rely on this source of information a lot, a little, or not at all.**

**Q24** Word of mouth – information from friends and family

- 61.4% A lot
- 29.5% A little
- 9.0% Not at all
- 0.2% Don't know / Refused

**Q25** Online reviews of child care programs

- 54.9% A lot
- 30.9% A little
- 13.7% Not at all
- 0.5% Don't know / Refused

**Q26** Comments and reviews on social media platforms

- 37.8% A lot
- 42.3% A little
- 19.8% Not at all
- 0.1% Don't know / Refused

**Q27** Tours of child care programs

53.6% A lot  
 26.4% A little  
 19.2% Not at all  
 0.9% Don't know / Refused

**Q28** Licensing and regulation information

56.9% A lot  
 24.3% A little  
 18.1% Not at all  
 0.7% Don't know / Refused

**Q29** Texas Child Care Availability Portal

25.1% A lot  
 19.3% A little  
 54.3% Not at all  
 1.4% Don't know / Refused

**Q30** Information from local workforce boards

24.0% A lot  
 27.8% A little  
 47.4% Not at all  
 0.9% Don't know / Refused

**Q31** Have you ever heard of the Texas Rising Star Program?

19.8% Yes  
 76.1% No  
 4.1% Don't know / Refused

**Q32** Have you used the Texas Rising Star quality-rating system to identify child care options for your child/children?

27.9% Yes  
 68.9% No  
 3.3% Don't know / Refused

**Q33** If your child currently attends a Texas Rising Star certified child care program, does the Texas Rising Star rating for your child's/children's care program match your expectations for the quality of the program?

20.1% Yes  
 5.3% No  
 74.6% Don't know / Refused

**Q34** If you know a child care program is certified as a Texas Rising Star program, would your family travel further each day or be willing to pay a bit more to place them in a quality-rated program?

50.8% Yes  
 25.7% No  
 23.5% Don't know / Refused

**Q35** Which of these categories is most important to you in determining high-quality child care?

27.2% Qualifications of the directors and teachers  
 48.5% Quality of the teacher-child interactions  
 9.5% How the program is managed  
 9.5% Quality of indoor and outdoor environments  
 5.4% Don't know / Refused

**Q36** Having heard all of this information how likely are you to use the Texas Rising Star quality ratings to identify high-quality child care programs near where you work or live?

37.5% Very likely  
 38.3% Somewhat likely  
 8.6% Somewhat unlikely  
 8.7% Very unlikely  
 6.9% Don't know / Refused

**Texas Rising Star also provides information for families about opportunities to receive financial assistance to cover the costs of child care, and links to the local workforce boards across Texas which administer these assistance programs.**

**Q37** How likely are you to visit the Texas Rising Star website to learn more about financial assistance for child care services?

- 41.1% Very likely
- 30.0% Somewhat likely
- 10.6% Somewhat unlikely
- 14.1% Very unlikely
- 4.3% Don't know / Refused

**Q38** Please tell us your age range.

- 2.2% 18 to 24
- 24.6% 25 to 34
- 49.7% 35 to 44
- 15.0% 45 to 54
- 4.8% 55 to 64
- 3.6% 65 or older
- 0.0% Don't know / Refused

**Q39** Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- 40.1% Yes
- 59.6% No
- 0.3% Don't know / Refused

**Q40** Please tell us your race

**COMBINED RACIAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION**

- 37.8% White
- 13.2% Black or African American
- 5.2% Asian

- 40.1% Hispanic
- 1.1% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 1.6% Other
- 0.9% Don't know / Refused

**Q41** For statistical purposes, please confirm your gender.

- 58.0% Female
- 41.7% Male
- 0.3% Non-binary

**Q42** Thanks, please tell us the highest level of education you obtained.

- 18.9% High school or less
- 33.0% Some college
- 13.7% Associate degree
- 21.6% Four-year college degree
- 7.7% Some graduate work after college
- 4.9% A PhD, an MD, or a law degree
- 0.2% Don't know / Refused

**Q43** Please share your ZIP Code. [RECORD AND CODE]

**Q44** Finally, please tell us whether your household income falls into one of these categories:

- 14.8% Under \$30,000 per year
- 25.6% \$30,000 to \$60,000 per year
- 18.1% \$60,000 to \$90,000 per year
- 17.2% \$90,000 to \$120,000 per year
- 23.3% More than \$120,000 per year
- 1.0% Don't know / Refused



## DETAILED NARRATIVE

## About the Sample

The sample generally meets the regional and racial distribution of the Texas population. However, because the survey is seeking feedback from Texas families who may seek child care services, the survey targets families with children under six years of age. This makes the sample younger and more female than the overall population of Texas, while still matching the state population in most other demographic categories.

In terms of race and ethnicity, participants were first asked to share their race, and then were asked whether they are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. These results were then cross-referenced and coded into distinct racial categories – consistent with Census designations used to identify subgroups for reapportionment of the US adult population. This method separates Hispanics – who may be of any race – into its own cohort, leaving White, Black, Asian, and other cohorts as distinct groups for analysis

Using this method, the sample is 37.8 percent White, 13.2 percent Black or African American, 5.2 percent Asian American or Pacific Islander, 40.1 percent Hispanic, and 1.1 percent Native American or Alaskan Native. An additional 1.6 percent identify as “Other” or identify with more than one racial category. Twelve respondents (0.9 percent) declined to share their racial background.

**Table 1. Race and Ethnicity Distribution**

Racial Self-Identification	Population	Sample
<b>White</b>	39.8%	37.8%
<b>Black or African American</b>	13.4%	13.2%
<b>Asian American</b>	5.2%	5.2%
<b>Hispanic</b>	40.2%	40.1%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	1.1%	1.1%
<b>Other/Multi-Racial</b>	1.3%	1.6%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	0.0%	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>101%*</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The sample differences more in terms of age, since there are fewer adults with children under six in the general population in the youngest cohort (18 to 24), or in the cohorts older than 45 years old. 76.5 percent of the sample is under the age of 45, 19.8 percent are ages 45-64 and 3.6 percent are 65 years old or older. One respondent (zero percent) declined to share their age. A plurality of respondents are in the 35 to 44 years old cohort.

**Table 2. Age Distribution**

Age Cohort	Population	Sample
<b>18 to 24</b>	9.5%	2.2%
<b>25 to 34</b>	20.0%	24.6%
<b>35 to 44</b>	19.5%	49.7%
<b>45 to 54</b>	17.1%	15.0%
<b>55 to 64</b>	15.6%	4.8%
<b>65 or older</b>	18.3%	3.6%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Due to the relatively small subgroups for respondents ages 18 to 24 and 65 and older, the table below combines the 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 years old cohorts and the 55 to 64 and 65 and older cohorts. This report will use this combined approach when analyzing age cross-tabulations throughout the survey.

**Table 3. Combined Age Groups**

Age Cohort	Population	Sample
<b>18 to 34</b>	29.4%	26.8%
<b>35 to 44</b>	19.5%	49.7%
<b>45 to 54</b>	17.1%	15.0%
<b>55 or older</b>	34.0%	8.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This approach demonstrates the shift of the sample away from people over the age of 55 towards greater collection of responses from people ages 35 to 44.

In terms of gender, the sample skews more Female than Male – with 58.0 percent of respondents identifying as Female, 41.7 percent as Male, and 0.3 percent (four respondents) identifying as Non-binary. This compares to a 50.5 percent to 49.5 percent split between the Female and Male genders in the overall population of Texas.

**Table 4. Gender Distribution**

Gender	Population	Sample
<b>Female</b>	50.5%	58.0%
<b>Male</b>	49.5%	41.7%
<b>Non-binary</b>	0.0%	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

In terms of income, per the United States Census 2021 American Community Survey (released in July of 2022), the median income in Texas was \$67,321. Area Median Income (AMI) is used to determine eligibility for numerous federally funded programs, including SNAP and TANF, while State Median Income (SMI) determines eligibility for child care assistance in Texas.

In the sample, 40.4 percent of respondents report a household income under \$60,000 a year, 40.5 percent report an income of more than \$90,000 a year, and 18.1 percent report an income between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year. This means the survey skews slightly higher in terms of income than the general Texas population. Thirteen respondents (1.1 percent) declined to share their income.

**Table 5. Income Distribution**

Household Income	Share
<b>Less than \$30,000 per year</b>	14.8%
<b>\$30,000 to \$60,000 per year</b>	25.6%
<b>\$60,000 to \$90,000 per year</b>	18.1%
<b>\$90,000 to \$120,000 per year</b>	17.2%
<b>More than \$120,000 per year</b>	23.3%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The income shares may correlate to age. The table below shows income by age cohort. Within each age cohort, red (hot) represents a high value, while blue (cold) represents a low number. Among respondents 65 and older, 28 of the 45 respondents (62.2 percent) reported a household income of less than \$60,000 a year. Seniors are more likely to be retired, or are on a fixed income, and because the survey focuses on families with a child under six years old in the household, there are fewer seniors in the sample than in the overall Texas population because seniors are usually not the primary caregiver for children under six years old. This may contribute to the income of the full survey sample skewing higher than the Texas population in general.

**Table 6. Income Distribution by Age Cohort**

Household Income	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65+	DK/REF	Total
Under \$30,000 per year	18	47	69	33	9	7	0	183
\$30,000 to \$60,000 per year	5	71	138	56	28	21	0	318
\$60,000 to \$90,000 per year	0	72	106	29	8	10	0	224
\$90,000 to \$120,000 per year	2	63	111	25	8	4	0	213
More than \$120,000 per year	2	49	189	42	6	3	0	290
Don't know / Refused	1	4	5	1	1	1	1	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,243</b>

For a more condensed analysis of household income throughout the report, the lower income cohorts (under \$30,000 a year and \$30,000 to \$60,000 a year will be combined, as well as the income cohorts above \$90,000 a year). This leaves three household income cohorts to review – under \$60,000 a year, \$60,000 to \$90,000 a year, and more than \$90,000 a year – one cohort roughly below median income, and two above.

In terms of educational attainment, per the United States Census 2021 American Community Survey, 31.5 percent of the Texas population 25 and older holds a bachelor’s degree or higher. In the sample, 65.6 percent have less than a four year degree, and 34.2 percent hold a bachelor’s degree, have some post-graduate work, or post-graduate degree. Three respondents (0.2 percent) declined to share their educational background.

**Table 7. Educational Attainment Distribution**

Educational Attainment	Population	Share
High school or less	39.2%	18.9%
Some college	20.2%	33.0%
Associate degree	7.5%	13.7%
Four-year college degree	21.2%	21.6%
Some post-college graduate work	-	7.7%
A PhD, an MD, or a law degree	11.9%	4.9%
Don't know / Refused	-	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



## Regional Distribution

Texas is a large state, with complex regional considerations.

Respondents were asked to share their current ZIP Code, which is matched to a county, and then to their local Workforce Board Area.

Combining Census estimates by county, aggregating them into the Workforce Board Areas, and then doing the same for survey responses indicate the sample generally matches 2021 Census estimates for the Texas population.

**Table 8. Regional Distribution**

<b>Workforce Board Area</b>	<b>Share of Population</b>	<b>Share of Sample</b>
<b>Alamo</b>	9.2%	9.1%
<b>Borderplex</b>	3.0%	2.6%
<b>Brazos Valley</b>	1.2%	1.0%
<b>Cameron</b>	1.4%	1.3%
<b>Capital Area</b>	4.4%	6.4%
<b>Central</b>	1.8%	2.3%
<b>Coastal Bend</b>	1.9%	2.3%
<b>Concho Valley</b>	0.5%	0.3%
<b>Deep East</b>	1.3%	0.7%
<b>East</b>	3.0%	2.4%
<b>Golden Crescent</b>	0.6%	0.3%
<b>Greater Dallas</b>	8.7%	7.6%
<b>Gulf Coast</b>	25.0%	25.1%
<b>Heart of Texas</b>	1.3%	1.2%
<b>Lower Rio Grande Valley</b>	3.2%	5.2%
<b>Middle Rio Grande</b>	0.5%	0.6%
<b>North Central</b>	11.3%	10.3%
<b>North Texas</b>	0.7%	0.6%
<b>Northeast</b>	0.9%	0.9%
<b>Panhandle</b>	1.4%	1.1%
<b>Permian Basin</b>	1.6%	1.8%
<b>Rural Capital</b>	4.1%	3.4%
<b>South Plains</b>	1.5%	1.3%
<b>South Texas</b>	1.0%	1.5%
<b>Southeast</b>	1.3%	2.3%
<b>Tarrant</b>	7.2%	5.8%
<b>Texoma</b>	0.7%	1.3%
<b>West Central</b>	1.1%	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

However, the small size of some of the Workforce Board Areas prevents their use for comparative analysis purposes, because the samples from those Board Areas are too small to provide meaningful insights at the subgroup level.

Instead, responses are aggregated into geographical regions, based on combining media markets and their underlying counties into more effective analytical cohorts. Using media markets to define regions is an effective research practice, as it can help target communications and media strategies to desired audiences.

For this survey, it means dividing the sample into six regional cohorts – Dallas, Houston, Central (which includes the Austin and San Antonio media markets), South, West, and East.

**Table 9. Defined Regional Cohorts**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Share</b>
<b>Houston</b>	25.6%
<b>Dallas</b>	25.2%
<b>Central</b>	24.1%
<b>South</b>	10.4%
<b>West</b>	8.7%
<b>East</b>	6.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This distribution creates three statistically similar large regions around the larger media markets in the state (Houston, Dallas, and Central), and three smaller regions (South, West, and East) – all six of which generally match the distribution of the state’s current estimated population.

Overall, the sample generally aligns with the demographics and geographic distribution of families with young children across Texas. As each battery of questions is analyzed, relevant signals at the subgroup level will be highlighted for consideration and potential action.

## Family Composition

Across the 1,243 responses, there are a total of 3,456 children under the age of 18, an average of nearly three children per household.

**Table 10. Households by Number of Children**

Children	Families	Total Children
1	287	287
2	411	822
3	246	738
4	163	652
5	46	230
6	37	222
7	20	140
8	14	112
9	6	54
10	4	40
11	2	22
12	1	12
13	1	13
14	1	14
15	1	15
16	1	16
19	1	19
21	1	21
27	1	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>3,456</b>

75.9 percent of respondents have three or fewer children under the age of 18 in their households; and an additional 22.9 percent have between four and nine children under the age of 18.

The data reflects a few outliers – with 15 households reporting the presence of ten or more children. Among these families, eight identify as Hispanic, three identify as Black, two identify as Native American, and two identify as White.

Three of these families have a four-year degree or more – lower than levels of the overall sample, but it is not a statistically significant subgroup of 15 responses. Six earn more than \$90,000 a year, five earn less than \$60,000 a year, and four earn between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year. Twelve are between the ages of 25 and 44, two are under 25 years old, and one is in the 45-54 age cohort.

**Overall, 956 households (76.9 percent) have more than one child in the household, creating the potential need for more than one child care solution for the family or household.**

Survey respondents were asked to share how many children they have in their home across distinct age cohorts. The table below indicates the number of children identified within each age group, each totaling the 1,243 responses.

**Table 11. Count of Children by Child Age**

Count	0-17 mos.	18 mos-2y	3-5 y	6-9 y	10-12 y	13-18 y
<b>0</b>	847	856	504	757	1,003	952
<b>1</b>	285	345	625	388	207	196
<b>2</b>	57	39	87	76	26	60
<b>3</b>	26	2	16	7	4	21
<b>4</b>	16	0	6	0	0	9
<b>5</b>	9	0	5	3	0	2
<b>6</b>	3	0	1	4	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0	5	1	1
<b>8</b>	0	0	0	2	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	1	0	0	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>1,243</b>

Among all families, 535 households only have a child or children under six years old, while 708 also have at least once child six years old or older within the household.

**Table 12. Total Number of Children in the Home by Combined Age Group**

Children	Under 6y	6y - 18y	Total
1	287		287
2	182	229	411
3	37	209	246
4	15	148	163
5	7	39	46
6	4	33	37
7	3	17	20
8	1	13	14
9		6	6
10		4	4
11		2	2
12		1	1
13		1	1
14		1	1
15		1	1
16		1	1
19		1	1
21		1	1
27		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>1,243</b>

As shown later – the families with older children are far more likely to rely on in-home care than families without older children.

## Family Relationships

Respondents were asked to identify their relationship to the child or children under six years old in their household. A supermajority of 80.2 percent are the biological or adoptive parents of the child, 13.6 percent are grandparents, 2.4 percent are other relatives, and the remainder are foster, sibling, or non-relative relationships.

**Table 13. Distribution by Relationships of Respondent to Child**

Relationship to Child	Share	Count
<b>Biological or adopted child</b>	80.2%	996
<b>Grandchild</b>	13.6%	169
<b>Other relative</b>	2.4%	30
<b>Foster child</b>	1.2%	14
<b>Sibling</b>	1.0%	12
<b>Other non-relative</b>	0.9%	12
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	0.8%	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,243</b>

Overall, 93.7 percent of respondents indicated a parent or grandparent relationship to the child. The sibling and other relative households are not included in this combination because they are too small to be analyzed at the subgroup level. While the overall percentage of children being raised in this context remains high across racial cohorts, there are measurable differences among the racial groups in the percentage of these direct relationships.

**Table 14. Distribution by Racial Self-Identification and Parental Relationships**

Racial Self-Identification	Child	Grandchild	% of Sample
<b>White</b>	85.4%	9.5%	94.9%
<b>Black or African American</b>	68.7%	23.9%	92.6%
<b>Asian American</b>	91.5%	6.4%	97.9%
<b>Hispanic</b>	77.2%	15.0%	92.2%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
<b>Other</b>	81.9%	9.0%	91.0%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	78.8%	21.2%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>93.7%</b>

Black (23.9 percent) and Hispanic (15.0 percent) households are more likely to have a grandparent who is the immediate guardian of a child under six years old in the household. This may be an indicator of a greater prevalence of multi-generational households in these two cohorts, or it may indicate the absence of the biological parent in the household – the survey did not inquire. These are, however, meaningful statistical differences, which when coupled with the lower rates of educational attainment and lower income reported by older respondents in the survey, can affect access to child care options for the household.

Grandparents in the survey inhabit these challenges. Only 19.2 percent of grandparents have a four-year degree or post-graduate study, and 62.5 percent of grandparents earn less than \$60,000 a year. The children they care for may face greater challenges, and these families may need more support.

## The Need for Specialized Care

Respondents were asked to identify whether any of the children under six years old in the household had any diagnosed special needs, a disability, or a chronic medical condition requiring specialized child care services.

A supermajority of 87.5 percent do not have a child with special needs, while 152 respondents (12.3 percent) have a child with special needs or a condition requiring specialized care. This is slightly below the United States Census 2021 American Community Survey estimate of 12.6 percent of the national population having a disability (for all age groups), and slightly above the 12.1 percent estimate for Texas.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires local education agencies (LEAs) to conduct an initial evaluation when there is suspicion that a child has a disability and, as result of the disability, needs special education and related services. Families are eligible to have an initial evaluation once the child reaches three years of age, but since pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are not mandatory in Texas, many families do not access evaluation services until their child enters first grade, usually around the age of six years old.

Respondents were then asked to share what type of specialized care, if any, their child may need.

Respondents shared more than 30 different descriptions of the conditions or specialized care needs their children require. Some children have more than one condition requiring specialized care.

**Table 15.** *Count of Children with Special Needs and Medical Conditions*

Condition/Care Needs	Total
Autism/ABA Therapy	36
Speech Therapy	34
ADHD	9
Asthma	6
Neurological	4
Gastric Condition	4
Mobility Impaired	4
Diabetes	3
Occupational Therapy	3
Physical Therapy	3

Autism and its therapy strategies were mentioned 36 times, speech therapy 34 times, ADHD nine times, Asthma six times, and neurological conditions four times.

There were also several other named conditions, a large number of general references to special needs or disability, and a few respondents who preferred not to share specifics information about the child's special needs or health conditions.

The population needing specialized care is similar to the composition of the overall sample. The table below details self-identified racial cohorts among those needing specialized care and the overall sample. As will be shown throughout the survey, there are meaningful differences in how families with different racial backgrounds access child care in general, creating even more challenges for families needing access to specialized care for their family.

**Table 16. Distribution of Children Requiring Specialized Care by Racial Self-Identification**

Racial Self-Identification	Specialized Care	Full Sample
White	36.5%	37.8%
Black or African American	17.1%	13.2%
Asian American	2.9%	5.2%
Hispanic	40.6%	40.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%	1.1%
Other	0.6%	1.6%
Don't know / Refused	2.0%	0.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The families with children who need specialized care were asked to identify any challenges they encounter accessing or locating specialized care services, and could select more than one response. 55.5 percent cited costs as a challenge, 46.8 percent indicated the providers in their area did not have the proper training or experience to provide specialized care, 38.0 percent indicated the providers were not accepting new enrollments, and 4.2 percent indicated specialized services were not offered in their child's language.

**Table 17. Challenges Faced in Accessing Child Care for Children with Special Needs**

Challenges in Accessing Child Care	Share
Costs for specialized care are too high	55.5%
No providers in my area with proper training or experience in specialized care	46.8%
Providers are not accepting new enrollments	38.0%
Providers don't offer specialized care in my child's language	4.2%

When viewed in combination, high costs and the lack of training or experience create significant challenges for the families who need specialized care. A combined 81.4 percent of these respondents indicate either Cost or Training were challenges they have encountered in seeking care for their children. A combined 41.1 percent of these families cited either Access or Language as a challenge.

**Table 18. Combined Challenges Faced in Accessing Child Care for Children with Special Needs**

Challenges in Accessing Child Care	Share	81.4%
Cost	27.7%	
Cost, Availability	6.7%	
Cost, Language	0.3%	
Training	20.0%	
Training, Cost	11.2%	
Training, Cost, Availability	7.6%	
Training, Cost, Language	0.5%	
Training, Cost, Language, Availability	1.0%	
Training, Availability	6.5%	
Availability	16.2%	
Language	2.4%	

When viewed in isolation – the response from those who cited a single factor as a challenge, Cost is 27.7 percent, Training is 20.0 percent, Availability is 16.2 percent, and Language is 2.4 percent (the figures highlighted in blue in the above table).

The challenges in accessing specialized care shape a family’s child care decisions. Families with a child requiring specialized care are more likely to care for the child in the home setting than in a formal child care setting, and at a greater level than the overall sample. Among the 152 respondents with a child requiring specialized care, 63.8 percent care for their child in their household, 5.3 percent rely on an informal care outside the household, and 31.0 percent use a formal child care setting.

**Table 19. Distribution of Specialized Care Needs by Child Care Setting**

Primary Child Care Setting	Specialized Care Needs	Total Sample
In-Household Care	63.8%	53.3%
Informal, Outside of Household	5.3%	6.5%
Formal Child Care	31.0%	40.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Child Care Settings

Respondents were asked to share their child care routine for each child under six years old in their household during a typical week – ranging from direct family care in the household to formal care by a child care professional in a child care center or home. Respondents could select more than one option.

Overall, 61.1 percent of respondents say the child was cared for by the respondent or another parent or guardian in the household, 25.8 percent say the child was cared for by another adult in the household, and 10.1 percent say the child was cared for by older siblings of the child in the household. Separately, 25.3 percent of respondents say the child was cared for by relatives or friends outside the household, and 40.1 percent used a formal, child care professional in a center or home.

**Table 20. Child Care Practices**

Child Care Practices	Share
<b>Cared for by you or another parent or guardian in your household</b>	61.1%
<b>Cared for by other adults in your household</b>	25.8%
<b>Cared for by older siblings in your household</b>	10.1%
<b>Informally cared for by relatives or friends outside your household</b>	25.3%
<b>Formally cared for by a child care professional in a center or home</b>	40.1%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	0.1%

These five solutions can be combined into three categories: child care in the household, informal care outside the household, and formal care in a child care setting. By focusing first on those who rely on child care in their home for a majority of the days in a week, and then separating out those who mostly rely on formal child care, it leaves a smaller band of people who rely on informal care as their primary child care solution.



**Table 21. Distribution by Child Care Setting**

Primary Child Care Setting	Share
In-Household (Parent, Other Adult, Sibling)	53.3%
Informal, Outside the Household	6.5%
Formal Child care	40.1%
Don't know / Refused	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

In evaluating each of these categories, the days families rely on form of child care each fits an expected pattern – families using the in-household solution use it seven days a week, while those who rely on a formal child care setting use it five days a week. A plurality of those who use an informal setting also use it five days a week, though to a lower percentage than a formal child care setting. There is also a more even spread across the days of the week for families using an informal set of arrangements, with the second-highest total being one day a week.

**Table 22. Distribution by Days of the Week in Care and Child Care Setting**

Days of Care Each Week	In-Household	Informal	Formal
One day	2.6%	21.5%	13.6%
Two days	11.6%	17.1%	3.1%
Three days	3.1%	14.4%	6.0%
Four days	3.5%	13.2%	3.7%
Five days	9.2%	23.7%	68.7%
Six days	1.5%	2.3%	2.2%
Seven days	68.6%	8.0%	2.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

How families choose to care for their children varies among some of the subgroups.

In terms of age, there is a strong preference for home-centered solutions among respondents 45 to 54 years old. While there is a demonstrated reliance on home solutions across the sample, the 45 to 54 age cohort is least reliant on a formal care setting.

**Table 23. Distribution by Age Cohort and Child Care Setting Preference**

Age Cohort	In-Household	Informal	Formal	Total
18 to 34	51.2%	8.5%	40.3%	100.0%
35 to 44	49.1%	6.6%	44.3%	100.0%
45 to 54	69.0%	4.1%	26.4%	100.0%
55 or older	56.9%	4.0%	39.1%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The table immediately below shows the cross-tabulation of age cohort and self-identified race for the overall sample. The reason the respondents ages 45 to 54 rely more on home-centered child care solutions may relate to how the overall survey sample is more non-White among older cohorts.

**Table 24. Distribution by Self-Identified Race and Age Cohort**

Racial Self-Identification	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 +	Total
White	39.0%	42.6%	26.5%	26.4%	37.8%
Black or African American	9.8%	11.3%	21.0%	21.8%	13.2%
Asian American	2.8%	6.6%	5.3%	3.9%	5.2%
Hispanic	45.3%	36.0%	44.5%	40.3%	40.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.5%	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%
Other/Multi-Racial	1.2%	1.8%	1.2%	1.7%	1.6%
Don't know / Refused	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	4.7%	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As shown in this following table, while White respondents are nearly evenly divided between using home-centered (47.8 percent) and formal child care solutions (47.5 percent), non-White respondents are more reliant on home-centered child care solutions. Hispanic families are much more likely to depend on home-centered solutions (60.7 percent) than a formal child care setting (31.5 percent).

**Table 25. Distribution by Self-Identified Race and Child Care Setting**

Racial Self-Identification	In-Household	Informal	Formal	Total
White	47.8%	4.5%	47.5%	100.0%
Black or African American	49.9%	9.1%	41.0%	100.0%
Asian American	48.7%	6.8%	44.5%	100.0%
Hispanic	60.7%	7.8%	31.5%	100.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	58.4%	0.0%	41.6%	100.0%
Other/Multi-Racial	43.0%	4.6%	52.4%	100.0%
Don't know / Refused	44.4%	5.8%	49.8%	100.0%
Total	53.3%	6.5%	40.1%	100.0%

**Child care decisions differ the most in the context of income and educational attainment.**

While respondents from the lower and middle household income cohorts are relatively similar in their preference or usage of home or family-centered child care solutions, the upper household income cohort is much more likely to use a formal child care solution.

A majority of respondents earning under \$60,000 a year (59.5 percent) and between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (60.2 percent) rely on a home or family-centered child care solution, while a majority of respondents earning more than \$90,000 a year (51.3 percent) rely on formal child care solution.

**Table 26. Cross-Tabulation of Child Care Setting and Household Income**

Household Income	In-Household	Informal	Formal	Total
Under \$60,000 a year	59.5%	7.2%	33.4%	100.0%
\$60,000 to \$90,000 a year	60.2%	8.1%	31.7%	100.0%
More than \$90,000 a year	43.4%	5.2%	51.3%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents with a four-year college degree, post-graduate work, or a post-graduate degree are more likely to use a formal child care solution (52.0 percent) than a home or family-centered child care solution (43.0 percent), and are least-likely to use an informal care setting (4.8 percent). Respondents with less than a four-year college degree are more likely to rely on a home-or family-centered child care solution (56.9 percent) than a formal child care solution (34.0 percent), and are slightly more likely to use an informal solution (7.4 percent).

**Table 27.** *Cross-Tabulation of Child Care Setting and Educational Level of Respondents*

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>In-Household</b>	<b>Informal</b>	<b>Formal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Less than a Four-Year Degree</b>	58.6%	7.4%	34.0%	100.0%
<b>College Degree or Post-Graduate</b>	43.0%	4.8%	52.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Complex Child Care Realities

The child care landscape is more complex than three options (in-household, informal, or formal child care), and many families rely on a mix of solutions to meet their child care needs. The table on the follow page shows the complex choices families have to make. 488 respondents (39.2 percent) indicated they used more than one of the listed solutions in their child care solutions – for a total of 24 combinations of care in addition to the five specific options presented in the survey.

**Table 28. Child Care Practices**

<b>Child Care Practices</b>	<b>Share</b>
Parent or Guardian	26.9%
Parent or Guardian, Informal Care	3.3%
Parent or Guardian, Informal Care, Professional Child Care	1.2%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults	7.6%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults, Informal Care	5.0%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults, Informal Care, Professional Child Care	1.5%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults, Professional Child Care	2.0%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults, Sibling	2.0%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults, Sibling, Informal Care	2.0%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults, Sibling, Informal Care, Professional Child Care	1.0%
Parent or Guardian, Other Adults, Sibling, Professional Child Care	0.5%
Parent or Guardian, Professional Child Care	4.9%
Parent or Guardian, Sibling	1.9%
Parent or Guardian, Sibling, Informal Care	0.6%
Parent or Guardian, Sibling, Informal Care, Professional Child Care	0.3%
Parent or Guardian, Sibling, Professional Child Care	0.4%
Other Adults	2.0%
Other Adults, Informal Care	0.9%
Other Adults, Informal Care, Professional Child Care	0.3%
Other Adults, Professional Child Care	0.8%
Other Adults, Sibling, Informal Care	0.1%
Other Adults, Sibling, Professional Child Care	0.1%
Sibling	0.9%
Sibling, Informal Care	0.1%
Sibling, Informal Care, Professional Child Care	0.1%
Sibling, Professional Child Care	0.2%
Informal Care	6.5%
Informal Care, Professional Child Care	2.5%
Professional Child Care	24.3%
Don't know / Refused	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Informal Child Care Practices

The 25.3 percent (314 respondents) who indicated they use some form of informal child care arrangements were asked if they provided financial compensation to the people providing the child care. 123 of the 314 respondents (39.4 percent) said they pay the informal child care provider.

These 314 respondents were then asked to share if they give providers anything other than money in exchange for child care, and were prompted with examples such as providing groceries or transportation, or doing work, such as caring for children or small repair jobs in exchange for the provided care. 121 of the 314 respondents (38.5 percent) offer some form of alternative compensation.

In combining the responses to the questions of both financial and alternative payment, 193 of the 314 respondents (61.5 percent) who use informal child care arrangements offer some form of compensation to the child care provider.

The families offering some form of compensation are more likely to be non-White. 72.2 percent of Black respondents and 71.2 percent of Hispanic respondents offer some form of compensation, while only 48.5 percent of White respondents offer compensation.

**Table 29.** *Compensation for Informal Child Care by Racial Self-Identification*

Racial Self-Identification	Compensate
White	48.5%
Black or African American	72.2%
Asian American	21.4%
Hispanic	71.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%
Other/Multi-Racial	46.5%
Don't know / Refused	59.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.5%</b>

Education attainment is also a factor. 63.9 percent of respondents with less than a four-year college degree are more likely to compensate for informal child care, while 55.8 percent of those with a four-year degree, post-graduate work, or a post-graduate degree offer compensation.

**Table 30.** *Compensation for Informal Child Care by Educational Attainment*

Educational Attainment	Compensate
Less than a Four-Year Degree	63.9%
College Degree or Post-Graduate	55.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.5%</b>

Income is a factor. While similarly high levels of respondents earning less than \$60,000 a year (64.9 percent) or earning between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (65.4 percent) offer compensation to those providing informal child care, 53.8 percent of respondents earning more than \$90,000 a year provide compensation.

**Table 31. Compensation for Informal Child Care by Household Income**

Household Income	Compensate
Under \$60,000 a year	64.9%
\$60,000 to \$90,000 a year	65.4%
More than \$90,000 a year	53.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.5%</b>

### Transportation and Mobility

The respondents who use child care solutions outside their own home – either in an informal or formal child care setting in a center or home – were asked to identify how they usually take their child or children to the child care provider.

This analysis covers 734 respondents, or 59.1 percent of all survey respondents.

87.9 percent of respondents take their children to child care via car. For most Texans, driving is essential, with few respondents relying on other mobility solutions.

**Table 32. Transportation Methods**

Transportation Methods	Total	Share
Car	645	87.9%
Walking or bicycle	13	1.8%
Public transportation	8	1.1%
School bus	6	0.8%
Other	44	6.0%
Don't know / Refused	17	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There is little variation among most subgroups. However, similar to responses in other areas of inquiry, race is a factor. Black respondents (85.7 percent) and Hispanic respondents (85.0 percent) are less likely than White respondents (90.9 percent) and Asian American respondents (90.9 percent) to use a car. Black respondents are the most likely to rely on public transportation (5.5 percent), Asian respondents are more likely to walk or bike, while Hispanics (8.5 percent) are the most likely to have an “Other” transportation method.

**Table 33. Methods of Transportation by Racial Self-Identification**

Transportation Methods	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other	Total
Car	90.9%	85.7%	90.9%	85.0%	93.4%	87.9%
Walking or bicycle	0.9%	2.5%	5.5%	2.2%	0.0%	1.8%
Public transportation	0.5%	5.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%
School bus	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	2.4%	0.8%
Other	4.3%	6.3%	3.7%	8.5%	0.0%	6.0%
Don't know / Refused	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	4.2%	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Not surprisingly, the larger media markets and regions have more walking and public transportation usage than the smaller media markets regions. Urban and suburban areas have more walkable neighborhoods and relatively larger investments in public transportation than in the smaller markets.

**Table 34. Methods of Transportation by Geographic Regions**

Transportation Methods	Houston	Dallas	Central	South	West	East	Total
Car	88.2%	85.4%	87.9%	91.3%	91.3%	86.9%	87.9%
Walking or bicycle	1.9%	0.9%	3.0%	1.6%	1.7%	0.0%	1.8%
Public transportation	2.6%	1.2%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
School bus	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Other	4.9%	8.6%	5.2%	7.1%	3.3%	4.9%	6.0%
Don't know / Refused	1.2%	2.9%	2.1%	0.0%	3.8%	8.2%	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Making Child Care Decisions

The next section of the survey focuses on factors respondents consider when choosing child care for their family. For each, they were asked to share whether they felt the factor was very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

Seven factors were presented:

- How important is it for a child care program to be close to where you live or work? **[Proximity]**
- How important is affordability when choosing a child care program? **[Affordability]**
- How important is the flexibility of hours or days of operation when choosing a child care program? **[Flexible Hours]**
- How important is safety when choosing a child care program? **[Safety]**
- How important is it for a child care program to have a nurturing environment for your child/children? **[Nurturing Environment]**
- How important is it for a child care program to be able to help your child/children be ready to learn in school? **[Ready to Learn]**
- How important is it for a child care program to be able to teach your child/children how to get along with other children? **[Social Skills]**

Each of the factors tested strongly as important, with all seven scoring at more than 90 percent when combining very important and somewhat important. Safety is the top factor, at 98.2 percent important.

**Table 35. Importance of Child Care Factors**

	Safety	Nurturing Environment	Social Skills	Ready to Learn	Affordability	Flexible Hours	Proximity
<b>Important</b>	98.2%	98.0%	96.8%	95.6%	95.2%	93.9%	93.1%
<b>Neither Important Nor Unimportant</b>	1.0%	1.4%	1.9%	3.1%	2.6%	3.8%	3.5%
<b>Unimportant</b>	0.8%	0.6%	1.3%	1.3%	2.3%	2.3%	3.4%
<b>Net Importance</b>	97.5%	97.4%	95.5%	94.3%	92.9%	91.6%	89.7%
<b>Mean</b>	4.94	4.89	4.76	4.76	4.72	4.60	4.65

The responses were also converted to a 1 to 5 scale from low to high, with one being Not Important at All, and 5 being Very Important. This allowed all of the responses to be ranked, and then averaged (the

mean). With this methodology, any mean greater than 4.5 indicates a high level of importance and influence to respondents. Every tested factor passes this threshold.

Overall, the child-centered factors – their safety, environment, and development matter slightly more to families than the financial or logistical considerations of affordability, flexible hours, or proximity.

With respondents placing high levels of importance on each factor, there are no significant or actionable variations across the racial, gender, age, education, income, or regional subgroups.

Respondents were then asked to identify which of the seven factors they think is the most important. Safety is the top factor at 44.5 percent, followed by Affordability at 23.4 percent, a Nurturing Environment at 12.7 percent, Proximity at 6.4 percent, Ready to Learn at 5.6 percent, Social Skills at 3.8 percent, and Flexible Hours at 3.0 percent.

**Table 36. Important Child Care Factors**

Most Important Factor	Total
Safety	44.5%
Affordability	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	12.7%
Proximity	6.4%
Ready to Learn	5.6%
Social Skills	3.8%
Flexible Hours	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There are many meaningful differences at the subgroup level.

Each of the age cohorts under 55 are more likely to identify Safety as the most important factor, with respondents 18 to 34 years old the most likely, at 53.1 percent. Respondents 55 years and older are the most likely to identify Affordability (40.5 percent) as the most important factor.

**Table 37. Important Child Care Factors by Age Cohort**

Most Important Factor	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55+	Total
Safety	53.1%	42.4%	43.4%	30.7%	44.5%
Affordability	19.0%	22.1%	26.0%	40.5%	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	13.1%	13.5%	11.8%	9.1%	12.7%
Proximity	3.4%	8.0%	6.4%	6.0%	6.4%
Ready to Learn	5.3%	6.2%	4.5%	4.7%	5.6%
Social Skills	3.2%	4.3%	3.5%	4.0%	3.8%
Flexible Hours	2.4%	2.8%	3.9%	4.0%	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	1.0%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Respondents 55 and older are also the least likely to identify a Nurturing Environment (9.1 percent) as important. 50.6 percent of respondents 55 years old and older identify the combination of Affordability, Proximity, and Flexible Hours as most important – a greater level than the other age cohorts, which combine in the mid-twenties to mid-thirties.

In terms of gender, both Female and Male respondents identify Safety and Affordability as the two most important factors. Female respondents (15.1 percent) are more likely than Male respondents (9.4 percent) to identify a Nurturing Environment as important, while Male respondents (9.3 percent) are more than Female Respondents to identify Ready to Learn (2.9 percent) as important. Female respondents represent 58.0 percent of the sample, Males are 41.7 percent of the sample, and the four Non-binary respondents are 0.3 percent of the sample (which makes their responses statistically insignificant).

**Table 38. Important Child Care Factors by Gender**

Most Important Factor	Female	Male	Non-bin	Total
Safety	46.2%	42.1%	33.4%	44.5%
Affordability	23.4%	23.2%	52.0%	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	15.1%	9.4%	14.6%	12.7%
Proximity	5.1%	8.2%	0.0%	6.4%
Ready to Learn	2.9%	9.3%	0.0%	5.6%
Social Skills	3.7%	4.0%	0.0%	3.8%
Flexible Hours	2.9%	3.2%	0.0%	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.7%	0.5%	0.0%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Racial identification also shapes reactions to the importance of factors in choosing child care. A plurality of all racial cohorts identify Safety as a the most important factor. While respondents across all cohorts identify Affordability as the second-most important factor, White respondents (18.0 percent) are more likely to identify a Nurturing Environment as an important factor when compared to the other racial cohorts.

**Table 39. Important Child Care Factors by Racial Self-Identification**

Most Important Factor	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other	Total
Safety	45.4%	44.6%	45.4%	43.1%	47.8%	44.5%
Affordability	19.1%	29.3%	23.7%	25.6%	27.7%	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	18.0%	6.4%	11.8%	10.5%	2.8%	12.7%
Proximity	5.3%	7.7%	5.0%	7.7%	0.0%	6.4%
Ready to Learn	6.9%	2.1%	4.5%	5.0%	13.2%	5.6%
Social Skills	3.7%	6.4%	5.6%	2.8%	3.4%	3.8%
Flexible Hours	1.4%	3.4%	3.3%	4.4%	2.4%	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%	2.7%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents with less than a four-year college degree are more likely to identify Affordability (25.1 percent) and Proximity (7.2 percent) as important, while respondents with a four-year college degree, some post-graduate work, or a post-graduate degree are more likely to identify a Nurturing Environment as important.

**Table 40. Important Child Care Factors by Educational Level**

Most Important Factor	< 4-Year	4-Year +	Total
Safety	44.8%	44.0%	44.5%
Affordability	25.1%	20.3%	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	9.8%	18.5%	12.7%
Proximity	7.2%	4.8%	6.4%
Ready to Learn	5.3%	6.1%	5.6%
Social Skills	3.7%	4.0%	3.8%
Flexible Hours	3.5%	2.0%	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As expected, respondents earning less than \$60,000 (29.4 percent) and between \$60,000 and \$90,000 (28.8 percent) are more likely to identify Affordability as important. Respondents earning \$90,000 or more are less likely to identify Affordability (15.1 percent) and more likely to identify a Nurturing Environment (17.3 percent) as the most important factor.

**Table 41. Important Child Care Factors by Income**

Most Important Factor	< \$60K	\$60-90K	\$90K+	Total
Safety	41.1%	39.9%	49.9%	44.5%
Affordability	29.4%	28.8%	15.1%	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	9.3%	9.8%	17.3%	12.7%
Proximity	7.4%	7.5%	5.0%	6.4%
Ready to Learn	3.3%	8.4%	6.8%	5.6%
Social Skills	5.2%	3.4%	2.6%	3.8%
Flexible Hours	4.0%	1.3%	2.8%	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.3%	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents with a household income between \$60,000 and \$90,000 are more likely to identify being Ready to Learn (8.4 percent) and Proximity (7.5 percent) as important, while respondents earning more than \$90,000 are the least likely to identify Affordability (15.1 percent), but the most likely to identify a Nurturing Environment (17.3 percent) as important.

When considering where families choose to care for their children, families who primarily care for their child in their own household are the most likely to identify Affordability (27.8 percent) and Proximity (7.0 percent) as important; while those who have their child in a formal child care setting are more likely to identify Safety (46.2 percent) and a Nurturing Environment (16.9 percent) as important. Cost and access are important considerations for people who care for their children in their home or rely on informal care solutions, so improving awareness of the potential for financial assistance or available slots in child care programs could shape the child care decisions of those families.

**Table 42. Important Child Care Factors by Child Care Setting**

Most Important Factor	In-Household	Informal	Formal	Total
Safety	43.4%	41.6%	46.2%	44.5%
Affordability	27.8%	22.1%	17.8%	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	9.9%	10.7%	16.9%	12.7%
Proximity	7.0%	3.3%	6.1%	6.4%
Ready to Learn	5.0%	9.0%	5.8%	5.6%
Social Skills	3.0%	8.3%	4.3%	3.8%
Flexible Hours	3.0%	3.6%	2.8%	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.9%	1.3%	0.2%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The smaller group of participants who primarily rely upon informal, outside the household child care solutions are more similar to those who rely on in-household care, and are more likely to identify being Ready to Learn (9.0 percent), developing Social Skills (8.3 percent) and Flexible Hours (3.6 percent) as the most important factors.

The above data make sense – the people who are already choosing a formal child care setting have already resolved concerns about Affordability, Proximity, and Flexible Hours (a total of 26.7 percent), while those currently using a home setting view these factors as more important (37.8 percent).

On a regional basis, respondents from the West region (51.5 percent) and Dallas region (47.2 percent) are the most likely to identify Safety as important, while respondents from the East region are the least likely (37.8 percent) to identify Safety as important.

**Table 43. Important Child Care Factors by Geographic Region**

Most Important Factor	Houston	Dallas	Central	South	West	East	Total
Safety	41.6%	47.2%	43.7%	44.4%	51.5%	37.8%	44.5%
Affordability	23.9%	22.0%	25.1%	26.0%	19.8%	21.5%	23.4%
Nurturing Environment	12.7%	13.0%	14.3%	8.0%	10.4%	16.7%	12.7%
Proximity	7.4%	6.2%	5.2%	5.5%	8.6%	6.1%	6.4%
Ready to Learn	8.1%	4.1%	3.2%	5.9%	3.7%	12.4%	5.6%
Social Skills	3.6%	4.7%	3.1%	3.6%	3.9%	4.2%	3.8%
Flexible Hours	2.2%	1.9%	4.6%	6.2%	2.1%	0.0%	3.0%
Don't know / Refused	0.5%	0.8%	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents from the South (26.0 percent) and Central (25.1 percent) are the most likely to identify Affordability as important, and respondents from the East Region (16.7 percent) are the most likely to identify a Nurturing Environment as important.

Respondents from the West (8.6 percent) and Houston (7.4 percent) regions are the most likely to identify Proximity as important, while residents from the West (12.4 percent) and Houston (8.1 percent) regions are the most likely to identify being Ready to Learn as important.

Respondents from the South (6.2 percent) and Central (4.6 percent) regions are more likely to identify Flexible Hours as important.

The regional variations may be connected to the variations in demographic characteristics of each region – where the intersection of race, income, and education affect the choices families have and the factors they have consider when making child care decisions.

Additional Needs or Information

Respondents were asked if is there any other information they wanted to share about their child care situation. 305 respondents shared a total of 351 concerns and suggestions.

The most frequent responses are affordability (64 responses), the need for expanded or flexible hours (62 responses), concerns about the lack of availability (31 responses), the need for access to specialized care (19 responses), a range of safety and security concerns (17 responses), and the desire for robust or high-quality program options (10 responses).

**Table 44. Other Additional Needs**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Affordability</b>	64
<b>Expanded Hours</b>	62
<b>Availability</b>	31
<b>Specialized Care</b>	19
<b>Safety</b>	17
<b>Program Options</b>	10
<b>Language Programs</b>	9
<b>Location</b>	8
<b>Home</b>	8
<b>Nutrition</b>	7
<b>Transportation</b>	7

While many of these statements are consistent with the previously discussed factors, families express their needs in more personalized contexts, which end up falling into some of the existing categories.

## Sources of Information

Respondents were asked to share how they used different sources of information to research and understand options when considering child care for their family. For each, respondents shared whether they rely on the source of information a lot, a little, or not at all.

Respondents were presented with a randomized list of seven potential sources of information:

- Word of mouth – information from friends and family [**Word of Mouth**]
- Online reviews of child care programs [**Online Reviews**]
- Comments and reviews on social media platforms [**Social Media**]
- Tours of child care programs [**Site Tours**]
- Licensing and regulation information [**Licensing Information**]
- Texas Child Care Availability Portal [**Availability Portal**]
- Information from local workforce boards [**Workforce Boards**]

When combining the responses for “a lot” and “a little”, respondents use word of mouth (90.8 percent) most often as a source of information, followed by online reviews (85.8 percent), licensing information (81.2 percent), social media (80.1 percent), and tours of child care programs (80.0 percent). This feedback on frequently-used sources indicates how families use complementary approaches to research their options.

**Table 45. Usage of Information Source**

Information Source Usage	Word of Mouth	Online Reviews	Licensing Information	Social Media	Site Tours	Workforce Boards	Availability Portal
<b>A lot</b>	61.4%	54.9%	56.9%	37.8%	53.6%	24.0%	25.1%
<b>A little</b>	29.5%	30.9%	24.3%	42.3%	26.4%	27.8%	19.3%
<b>Not at all</b>	9.0%	13.7%	18.1%	19.8%	19.2%	47.4%	54.3%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	0.2%	0.5%	0.7%	0.1%	0.9%	0.9%	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There is a noticeable drop in usage for information from local Workforce Boards (51.7 percent) and the Texas Child Care Availability Portal (44.3 percent). This lack of usage aligns with the qualitative research, where few participants had heard of Texas Rising Star, the Child Care Availability Portal, or were aware of the relationship of the Workforce Boards to Texas Rising Star or child care in general.

The responses were separately recoded on a one to three scale – with one being respondents used the source “not at all,” two being respondents used the source “a little,” and three being respondents used the source “a lot.” These responses were then averaged and reported as the mean for each source. In this instance, a mean of more than 2.5 signals significant use, and a mean of more than 2.25 signals broad use of the information source. There is little difference in the findings using this ranking method.

**Table 46. Sources of Information by Combined Usage**

Information Source Usage	Word of Mouth	Online Reviews	Licensing Information	Social Media	Site Tours	Workforce Boards	Availability Portal
<b>Combined Usage</b>	90.8%	85.8%	81.2%	80.1%	80.0%	51.7%	44.3%
<b>Mean</b>	2.52	2.41	2.38	2.17	2.37	1.72	1.67

There are meaningful differences in the subgroups. There are not significant differences across the age cohorts in how respondents use word of mouth, online reviews, licensing information, or social media to inform their child care decisions, but there are some differences between younger and older cohorts with site tours and usage of the Availability Portal. Respondents ages 18-34 (84.0 percent) are more likely to use site tours than respondents 55 years old and older (72.6 percent). Conversely, respondents 55 years old and older (62.9 percent), are more likely than respondents 18 to 34 (41.5 percent) or respondents 35 to 44 (42.1 percent) to use the Texas Child Care Availability Portal.

**Table 47. Sources of Information by Age Cohort**

Information Source	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55+	Total
Word of Mouth	92.8%	90.8%	89.1%	90.1%	91.0%
Online Reviews	87.9%	86.2%	85.6%	82.7%	86.3%
Licensing Information	80.3%	82.6%	79.7%	86.6%	81.9%
Social Media	82.2%	80.9%	77.1%	82.7%	80.8%
Site Tours	84.0%	80.1%	77.9%	72.6%	80.2%
Workforce Boards	53.3%	49.5%	58.3%	58.4%	52.6%
Availability Portal	41.5%	42.1%	55.3%	62.9%	45.7%

When it comes to sources the Workforce Commission can directly leverage, the Workforce Boards and the Availability Portal, usage diverges in the middle of the age cohorts. Respondents in the two age cohorts under 45 are less likely to use information from the Workforce Boards and the Availability Portal than respondents from the two age cohorts over 45. Since the two age cohorts under 45 represent 76.5 percent of the sample, leveraging greater use of these two resources can significantly improve awareness among families of available choices and solutions.

There is also differentiation on the basis of racial identification. White respondents are the most likely to use word of mouth (92.3 percent), but are the least likely to use information from social media (79.6 percent), Workforce Boards (36.7 percent), and the Availability Portal (28.9 percent).

Black respondents are among the most likely to use licensing information (86.1 percent), while Asian respondents are among the highest users of social media (91.4 percent) and the most likely to use site tours (91.1 percent). Hispanic respondents are the most likely to use information from the Workforce Boards (66.3 percent) or the Availability Portal (59.8 percent).

**Table 48. Sources of Information by Racial Self-Identification**

Information Source	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Nat. Amer.	Other	Total
Word of Mouth	92.3%	91.2%	91.4%	90.3%	82.6%	81.8%	91.0%
Online Reviews	86.3%	86.3%	89.0%	86.7%	65.7%	83.9%	86.3%
Licensing Information	79.6%	86.1%	79.4%	82.9%	86.5%	91.6%	81.9%
Social Media	79.6%	80.7%	91.4%	80.7%	94.2%	85.9%	80.8%
Site Tours	81.2%	74.9%	91.1%	79.6%	65.7%	86.9%	80.2%
Workforce Boards	36.7%	57.7%	48.1%	66.3%	56.2%	42.9%	52.6%
Availability Portal	28.9%	50.6%	46.1%	59.8%	56.2%	45.3%	45.7%

In terms of gender, Female and Male respondents are nearly identical in ranking word of mouth and online reviews at the top two sources of information. Female respondents are more likely than Male respondents to use licensing information, social media, site tours, information from the Workforce Boards, and the Texas Child Care Availability Portal.

**Table 49. Sources of Information by Gender**

Information Source	Female	Male	Non-Binary	Total
Word of Mouth	90.9%	91.1%	100.0%	91.0%
Online Reviews	86.4%	86.0%	100.0%	86.3%
Licensing Information	85.8%	76.7%	50.0%	81.9%
Social Media	83.1%	78.1%	50.0%	80.8%
Site Tours	83.4%	76.0%	25.0%	80.2%
Workforce Boards	54.4%	50.1%	75.0%	52.6%
Availability Portal	47.8%	42.9%	25.0%	45.7%

In terms of educational attainment, there are minor differences in usage of word of mouth, online reviews, and site tours between respondents with less than a four-year college degree and those with a four-year degree, some post-graduate work or a post-graduate degree. Respondents with less than a four-year degree (83.0 percent) are slightly more likely to use licensing information than those with a four-year degree (79.8 percent), while those with a four-year degree or more (83.01 percent) are more slightly more likely than those with less than a four-year degree (79.8 percent) to use social media.

There are larger differences with respect to Workforce Boards and the Availability Portal. Respondents without a four-year degree are more likely to use information from Workforce Boards (58.6 percent) than respondents with a four year degree (41.0 percent); and respondents without a four-year degree are also more likely to use the Availability Portal (52.4 percent) than respondents with a four-year degree (32.7 percent).

**Table 50. Sources of Information by Educational Level**

Information Source	< 4-Year	4-Year +	Total
Word of Mouth	91.5%	90.3%	91.0%
Online Reviews	86.1%	86.8%	86.3%
Licensing Information	83.0%	79.8%	81.9%
Social Media	79.8%	83.1%	80.8%
Site Tours	80.5%	79.6%	80.2%
Workforce Boards	58.6%	41.0%	52.6%
Availability Portal	52.4%	32.7%	45.7%

There are similar differences in information usage based on income. Respondents with a household income of less than \$60,000 a year are less likely to use word of mouth (87.8 percent), social media (78.4 percent), or site tours (77.6 percent); but are the most likely to use information from Workforce Boards (65.8 percent) or the Availability Portal (60.7 percent).

Respondents with a household income between \$60,000 and \$90,000 are the most likely to use information gained by word out mouth (94.6 percent), online reviews (89.7 percent), information from licensing and regulation (83.9 percent), social media (84.7 percent) and site tours (86.4 percent).

Respondents earning more than \$90,000 are slightly more likely to use word of mouth information (92.7 percent), online review (86.9 percent) and social media (81.9 percent), but are the least likely to use information from the Workforce Boards (40.6 percent) or the Availability Portal (30.9 percent).

**Table 51. Sources of Information by Income**

Information Source	< \$60,000	\$60 to \$90K	\$90,000+	Total
<b>Word of Mouth</b>	87.8%	94.6%	92.7%	91.0%
<b>Online Reviews</b>	84.1%	89.7%	86.9%	86.3%
<b>Licensing Information</b>	83.6%	83.9%	79.2%	81.9%
<b>Social Media</b>	78.4%	84.7%	81.9%	80.8%
<b>Site Tours</b>	77.6%	86.4%	79.9%	80.2%
<b>Workforce Boards</b>	65.8%	49.2%	40.6%	52.6%
<b>Availability Portal</b>	60.7%	45.0%	30.9%	45.7%

How families currently care for their children matters. Respondents who have their children at home are less likely to utilize information from word of mouth (88.9 percent), online reviews (83.4 percent), social media (75.4 percent) or site tours (78.2 percent). They may or may not be in the market for child care support outside their home, and are less dependent on external information.

These respondents are more likely to use information from their Workforce Boards (57.1 percent) or the Availability Portal (49.7 percent).

**Table 52. Sources of Information by Child Care Setting**

Information Source	In-Household	Informal	Formal	Total
<b>Word of Mouth</b>	88.9%	92.8%	93.6%	91.0%
<b>Online Reviews</b>	83.4%	85.6%	90.2%	86.3%
<b>Licensing Information</b>	79.8%	75.6%	85.7%	81.9%
<b>Social Media</b>	75.4%	77.0%	88.6%	80.8%
<b>Site Tours</b>	78.2%	81.6%	82.5%	80.2%
<b>Workforce Boards</b>	57.1%	63.9%	44.9%	52.6%
<b>Availability Portal</b>	49.7%	50.7%	39.6%	45.7%

Respondents who rely on informal child care supports are the most likely to use information from the Workforce Boards (63.9 percent) and the Availability Portal (50.7 percent). They are the only group of respondents where a majority indicate they use each source of information.

Respondents who have their children in a formal child care setting are more likely to use word of mouth (93.6 percent), online reviews (90.2 percent), information from licensing and regulation (85.7 percent), and social media (88.6 percent). They are the least likely to use information from their Workforce Boards (44.9 percent) or the Availability Portal (39.6 percent).

**As has been shown throughout the survey, respondents with higher levels of income and educational attainment are more likely to have their children placed in a formal child care setting.**



## Testing Texas Rising Star

### Awareness

The survey shifted to an exploration of Texas Rising Star. Respondents were asked to share if they had heard of Texas Rising Star. Recognition is low – 246 respondents (19.7 percent) say they have heard of Texas Rising Star, 935 respondents (76.1 percent) have not, and 51 respondents (4.1 percent) did not know or refused to answer.

**Table 53. Texas Rising Star Awareness Distribution**

Have Heard of Texas Rising Star	Share
Yes	19.8%
No	76.1%
Don't know / Refused	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Female respondents are more likely (23.2 percent) than Male respondents (15.2 percent) to have heard of Texas Rising Star.

**Table 54. Awareness of Texas Rising Star by Gender**

Have Heard of Texas Rising Star	Female	Male	Non-binary	Total
Yes	23.2%	15.2%	0.0%	19.8%
No	73.6%	79.5%	100.0%	76.1%
Don't know / Refused	3.3%	5.3%	0.0%	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Black respondents (27.3 percent) are the most likely to have heard about Texas Rising Star, and Asian respondents (5.2 percent) are the least likely. White respondents (20.4 percent) and Hispanic respondents (19.2 percent) are closer to the overall sample in terms of awareness and recognition.

**Table 55. Awareness of Texas Rising Star by Racial Self-Identification**

Have Heard of Texas Rising Star	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Nat. Amer.	Other	Total
Yes	20.4%	27.3%	5.2%	19.2%	13.0%	17.4%	19.8%
No	76.0%	70.6%	91.6%	75.2%	87.0%	78.1%	76.1%
Don't know / Refused	3.5%	2.1%	3.2%	5.6%	0.0%	4.5%	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Income again surfaces as an area with differences. Respondents with a household income less than \$60,000 a year (23.3 percent) are the most likely to have heard of Texas Rising Star, while respondents with a household income between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (16.6 percent) or more than \$90,000 a year (17.4 percent) are slightly less likely than the overall sample to have heard of Texas Rising Star.

**Table 56. Awareness of Texas Rising Star by Income**

Have Heard of Texas Rising Star	< \$60,000	\$60 to \$90K	\$90,000 +	Total
Yes	23.3%	16.6%	17.4%	19.8%
No	72.6%	80.1%	78.0%	76.1%
Don't know / Refused	4.2%	3.2%	4.5%	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

On a regional basis, respondents from the East (28.6 percent) and South (28.5 percent) are the most likely to have heard of Texas Rising Star, while respondents from the West region are the least likely (13.4 percent) to have heard of Texas Rising Star.

**Table 57. Awareness of Texas Rising Star by Geographic Region**

Have Heard of Texas Rising Star	Houston	Dallas	Central	South	West	East	Total
Yes	16.4%	20.7%	18.8%	28.5%	13.4%	28.6%	19.8%
No	80.2%	74.5%	78.2%	65.6%	82.4%	66.3%	76.1%
Don't know / Refused	3.4%	4.8%	3.0%	5.9%	4.3%	5.1%	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The three largest regions – Houston (16.4 percent) Dallas (20.7 percent) and Central (18.8 percent) – could use improvement in recognition.

### Use of Texas Rising Star

The 246 respondents (19.8 percent of the full sample) who had heard of Texas Rising Star were asked if they have used the Texas Rising Star quality rating system to identify child care options for their families. Sixty-nine (69) respondents (27.9 percent of those who had heard of Texas Rising star and 5.5 percent of the overall sample) used Texas Rising Star, 169 respondents (68.9 percent of those who had heard of Texas Rising Star) did not use Texas Rising Star, and eight (8) respondents (3.3 percent of those who had heard of Texas Rising Star) did not know or refused to answer whether they had used Texas Rising Star.

**Table 58. Texas Rising Star Usage Distribution**

Have Used Texas Rising Star	Heard of Texas Rising Star	Share of Full Sample
Yes	27.9%	5.5%
No	68.9%	13.6%
Don't know / Refused	3.3%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>

### Caution with Small Samples

This low level of usage (5.5 percent of the full sample) makes it very difficult to draw distinct demographic or geographic comparisons or conclusions. The findings from this question – about the use of Texas Rising Star – have little statistical relation to the population of Texas, and are at best illustrative.

For example, respondents ages 18 to 34 (23.4 percent) reporting using Texas Rising Star, and respondents 55 years old and older (11.2 percent) reporting a lower percentage. However, these percentages are based on very small sample sizes, and are therefore subject to a greater margin of error (+/- 6.25 percent for the sample of 246 total responses, and much larger within the subgroups).

**Table 59. Texas Rising Star Usage by Age Cohort**

Have Used Texas Rising Star	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55+	Total
Yes	23.4%	20.0%	21.0%	11.2%	27.9%
No	8.6%	5.5%	1.1%	3.0%	68.9%
Don't know / Refused	68.0%	74.5%	77.9%	85.8%	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

With this caveat, the insights from the data are consistent with other findings involving the full sample. Respondents who rely on child care in their own home (16.0 percent) are far less likely than those who use a professional child care setting (38.5 percent) to have used Texas Rising Star.

**Table 60. Texas Rising Star Usage by Child Care Setting**

Have Used Texas Rising Star	In-Household	Informal	Formal	Total
Yes	23.4%	20.0%	21.0%	27.9%
No	8.6%	5.5%	1.1%	68.9%
Don't know / Refused	68.0%	74.5%	77.9%	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Asian American respondents (59.4 percent) are more likely to use Texas Rising Star than Hispanic (31.1 percent), Black (25.4 percent), or White (22.4 percent) respondents. These results from the Native American or Other cohorts are simply too small to be statistically relevant.

**Table 61. Texas Rising Star Usage by Racial Self-Identification**

Have Used Texas Rising Star	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Nat.Amer.	Other	Total
Yes	22.4%	25.4%	59.4%	31.1%	100.0%	61.8%	27.9%
No	75.6%	74.6%	40.6%	62.6%	0.0%	38.2%	68.9%
Don't know / Refused	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Female respondents (34.4 percent) are more likely than male respondents (14.1 percent) to use Texas Rising Star. None of the four non-binary respondents had known of Texas Rising Star.

**Table 62. Texas Rising Star Usage by Gender**

Have Used Texas Rising Star	Female	Male	Total
Yes	34.4%	14.1%	27.9%
No	63.1%	81.0%	68.9%
Don't know / Refused	2.5%	4.9%	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents with less than a four-year degree (24.0 percent) are less likely than those with a four-degree, post-graduate work, or a post graduate degree (36.6 percent) to use Texas Rising Star.

**Table 63. Texas Rising Star Usage by Educational Level**

Have Used Texas Rising Star	< 4-Year	4-Year +	Total
Yes	24.0%	36.6%	27.9%
No	72.0%	61.9%	68.9%
Don't know / Refused	4.0%	1.6%	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There was less variation on income. Respondents with a household income of less than \$60,000 a year (29.8 percent) or between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (32.3 percent) are more likely to use Texas Rising Star than respondents with a household income of more than \$90,000 a year (24.0 percent).

**Table 64. Texas Rising Star Usage by Income**

Have Used Texas Rising Star	< \$60,000	\$60 to \$90K	\$90,000+	Total
<b>Yes</b>	29.8%	32.3%	24.0%	27.9%
<b>No</b>	67.1%	67.7%	70.9%	68.9%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	3.0%	0.0%	5.1%	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Responses on a regional basis are too small to measure – one of the regions has a total of 14 responses from the original group of 246 respondents who have head of Texas Rising Star – which is far too small a subgroup to analyze with any statistical relevance.

Do Star Ratings Match Expectations?

The 246 respondents were then asked if their child currently attends a Texas Rising Star-certified child care program whether the star rating for the child care program matches their expectations for the quality of the program.

50 respondents (20.1 percent) feel their child care program’s star rating matches their expectations of quality, while 13 respondents (5.3 percent) feel the star rating does not match their expectations. 182 of the 246 respondents (74.6 percent) either did not know or refused to answer the question.

**Table 65. Texas Rising Star Expectations Distribution**

Star Ratings Meet Expectations	Total
<b>Yes</b>	20.1%
<b>No</b>	5.3%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	74.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

While a nearly four-to-one ratio between those who feel the star ratings match their expectations and those who feel the star ratings do not match their expectations, this is a very small set of responses and cannot be analyzed at the subgroup level in any meaningful way.

Texas Rising Star Messaging

All respondents were then read a description of Texas Rising Star:

Please let me the Texas Rising Star program to make sure you know what it is. The United States Department of Health and Human Services has developed standards for setting quality ratings and standards for improvement in child care. Here in Texas, that program is called Texas Rising Star and is managed under the Texas Workforce Commission.

Texas Rising Star rates child care programs using a Star system starting at entry-level and then assigning a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star rating. Child care programs are assessed every year, and Texas Rising Star provides resources to child care programs to help them improve or maintain their ratings.

After hearing this description, respondents were asked if they know a child care program is certified as a Texas Rising Star program, would their family travel further each day or be willing to pay a bit more to place them in a quality-rated program.

For the full sample, 631 respondents (50.8 percent) would travel further or be willing to pay a bit more, 320 respondents (25.7 percent) would not, and 292 respondents were unsure or refused to answer the question.

**Table 66. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost Distribution**

Travel Further or Pay More	Total
Yes	50.8%
No	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents 18 to 34 (52.6 percent), 35 to 44 (51.1 percent) and 45 to 54 (50.8 percent) are more willing to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program, while respondents 55 years old and older (43.2 percent) are less willing to travel further or pay more.

**Table 67. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost by Age Cohort**

Travel Further or Pay More	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55+	Total
Yes	52.6%	51.1%	50.8%	43.2%	50.8%
No	27.8%	25.3%	24.2%	25.0%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	19.6%	23.6%	25.0%	31.7%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Asian respondents (56.0 percent) are more willing than White (49.9 percent), Black (51.2 percent), and Hispanic (51.1 percent) respondents to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program.

**Table 68. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost by Racial Self-Identification**

Travel Further or Pay More	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Nat.Amer.	Other	Total
Yes	49.9%	51.2%	56.0%	51.1%	58.2%	32.1%	50.8%
No	26.9%	28.9%	18.8%	24.2%	28.3%	29.4%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	23.2%	19.9%	25.1%	24.8%	13.5%	38.6%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Male respondents (53.3 percent) are slightly more willing than female respondents (49.0 percent) to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program

**Table 69. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost by Gender**

Travel Further or Pay More	Female	Male	Non-bin.	Total
Yes	49.0%	53.3%	50.0%	50.8%
No	26.5%	24.6%	25.0%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	24.5%	22.1%	25.0%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There is no statistical difference in the willingness of respondents with less than a four-year college degree (51.0 percent) and those with a four-year degree, some post-graduate work, or a post-graduate degree (50.2 percent) to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program.

**Table 70. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost by Educational Level**

Travel Further or Pay More	< 4-Year	4-Year +	Total
Yes	51.0%	50.2%	50.8%
No	25.9%	25.6%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	23.1%	24.2%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There is also very little variation across income cohorts. Respondents with a household income less than \$60,000 a year (50.0 percent), between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (51.2 percent), and more than \$90,000 a year (51.3 percent) are very close in their willingness to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program.

**Table 71. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost by Income**

Travel Further or Pay More	< \$60,000	\$60 to \$90K	\$90,000 +	Total
Yes	50.0%	51.2%	51.3%	50.8%
No	24.7%	25.4%	26.6%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	25.3%	23.4%	22.1%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There is also little variation when evaluating the child care solutions families use. Respondents who provide child care in their home (51.9 percent), in an informal setting (50.6 percent) or in a professional child care center or home (49.3 percent) are all close to each other.

**Table 72. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost by Child Care Setting**

Travel Further or Pay More	In-Household	Informal	Formal	Total
Yes	51.9%	50.6%	49.3%	50.8%
No	23.4%	28.9%	28.4%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	24.8%	20.4%	22.3%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There are differences by region, with respondents from Dallas (53.2 percent), South (53.1 percent), and West (53.7 percent) being slightly more willing to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program; and respondents from Houston (49.2 percent), East (45.3 percent), and Central (39.9 percent) being less willing to travel further or pay more for a quality-rated child care program.

**Table 73. Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost by Geographic Region**

Travel Further or Pay More	Houston	Dallas	Central	South	West	East	Total
Yes	49.2%	53.2%	39.9%	53.1%	53.7%	45.3%	50.8%
No	25.2%	26.2%	30.9%	23.3%	22.2%	33.9%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	25.6%	20.6%	29.2%	23.6%	24.1%	20.9%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Comparing these results to the factors respondents find most important when making decisions about child care reveals a few important differences. Respondents who care the most for Proximity (42.6 percent) and Affordability (40.4 percent) are understandably less likely to be willing to travel further or spend more – even for a quality-rated child care program. However, respondents who care about Safety

(57.5 percent), developing Social Skills (56.9 percent), a child being Ready to Learn (52.1 percent), and Flexible Hours (51.5 percent) are more willing to travel further or pay more.

**Table 74. Cross-Tabulation of Texas Rising Star Impact on Travel and Cost and Child Care Decision Factors**

Travel Further or Pay More	Safety	Affordability	Nurturing Environment	Proximity	Ready to Learn	Social Skills	Flexible Hours	Total
Yes	57.5%	40.4%	49.1%	42.6%	52.1%	56.9%	51.5%	50.8%
No	21.5%	29.5%	27.5%	32.5%	30.8%	25.4%	21.7%	25.7%
Don't know / Refused	21.0%	30.1%	23.4%	24.8%	17.1%	17.7%	26.9%	23.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Overall, respondents seem less intensely supportive of being willing to travel further or pay more, but it is important to place these results in context. While the signals may not be as strong as from other areas of inquiry within the survey – a majority of respondents are willing to invest more time and/or money in a quality-rated child care program.

### Quality Categories

Respondents were then presented with information about Texas Rising Star’s Quality Categories.

Texas Rising Star identifies standards for what would be a high-quality child care program, based on four categories – the qualifications of the directors and teachers of the programs, the quality of the teacher-child interactions, how the program is managed, and the quality of their indoor and outdoor environments.

Respondents were then asked which category is most important in determining high-quality child care.

A plurality (48.5 percent) identify the quality of teacher-child interactions as the most important, followed by the qualifications of the directors and teachers (27.2 percent), and an equal number of responses for how the program is managed (9.5 percent) and the quality of the indoor and outdoor environments (9.5 percent). Sixty-seven (67) respondents (5.4 percent) did not know or declined to answer which quality category they feel is most important.

**Table 75. Importance of Quality Categories**

Quality Categories	Total
<b>CAT 1 - Qualifications of the directors and teachers</b>	27.2%
<b>CAT 2 - Quality of the teacher-child interactions</b>	48.5%
<b>CAT 3 - How the program is managed</b>	9.5%
<b>CAT 4 - Quality of indoor and outdoor environments</b>	9.5%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Every age cohort identifies teacher child interactions as the most important category. Overall, respondents younger than 45 years old are more likely to identify the quality of teacher-child interactions as the most important category than respondents ages 45 and older. It is 53.8 percent among respondents aged 18 to 34, 49.4 percent among respondents 35 to 44, 42.5 percent among respondents 45 to 54, and 37.0 percent among respondents ages 55 years old and older.

**Table 76. Importance of Quality Categories by Age Cohort**

Quality Categories	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55+	Total
<b>CAT 1 - Qualifications of the directors and teachers</b>	21.5%	27.3%	31.8%	36.4%	27.2%
<b>CAT 2 - Quality of the teacher-child interactions</b>	53.8%	49.4%	42.5%	37.0%	48.5%
<b>CAT 3 - How the program is managed</b>	12.5%	7.7%	8.8%	11.1%	9.5%
<b>CAT 4 - Quality of indoor and outdoor environments</b>	7.0%	9.8%	11.2%	11.9%	9.5%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	5.2%	5.7%	5.6%	3.6%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Every age cohort identifies the qualifications of the directors and teachers as the second most important quality category; but for this category the relative importance is greater among older respondents. It is 36.4 percent among respondents 55 years old and older, 31.8 percent among respondents 45 to 54, 27.3 percent among respondents 35 to 44, and 21.5 percent among respondents 18 to 34. . With the two younger cohorts representing 76.5 percent of the sample, family-facing messaging should focus on how Texas Rising Star prioritizes the quality of teacher-child interactions.

There is little variation among race. White respondents (51.4 percent), Black respondents (47.7 percent), Asian respondents (49.4 percent), and Hispanic respondents (46.9 percent) identify for teacher-child interactions as the most important, and have similar responses across the other quality categories.

**Table 77. Importance of Quality Categories by Racial Self-Identification**

Quality Categories	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Nat. Amer	Other	Total
<b>CAT 1 - Qualifications of the directors and teachers</b>	24.6%	26.2%	31.0%	29.7%	21.2%	18.4%	27.2%
<b>CAT 2 - Quality of the teacher-child interactions</b>	51.4%	47.7%	49.4%	46.9%	43.2%	41.0%	48.5%
<b>CAT 3 - How the program is managed</b>	8.7%	10.9%	8.9%	9.3%	13.3%	12.7%	9.5%
<b>CAT 4 - Quality of indoor and outdoor environments</b>	9.9%	11.4%	6.8%	8.5%	22.3%	11.5%	9.5%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	5.4%	3.8%	3.9%	5.6%	0.0%	16.4%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Female respondents (51.8 percent) are more likely than Male respondents (44.2 percent) to identify teacher-child interactions as the most important quality category. Male respondents are slightly more likely than Female respondents to identify the qualifications of directors and teachers (28.4 percent), how a program is managed (10.6 percent), and the quality of the learning environments (11.4 percent) as the most important category..

**Table 78. Importance of Quality Categories by Gender**

Quality Categories	Female	Male	Non-bin.	Total
<b>CAT 1 - Qualifications of the directors and teachers</b>	26.3%	28.4%	25.0%	27.2%
<b>CAT 2 - Quality of the teacher-child interactions</b>	51.8%	44.2%	25.0%	48.5%
<b>CAT 3 - How the program is managed</b>	8.5%	10.6%	25.0%	9.5%
<b>CAT 4 - Quality of indoor and outdoor environments</b>	8.1%	11.4%	0.0%	9.5%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	5.2%	5.5%	25.0%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Female respondents are a greater share of the sample (58.0 percent), and since a plurality of Male respondents also identify teacher-child interactions as the most important quality category, there is little to no need for differentiation in message development.



There is minimal variation on the basis of educational attainment. Respondents with less than a four-year degree (47.4 percent) and respondents who have a four year degree or additional post-graduate education (50.7 percent) both identify teacher-child interactions as the most important quality category.

**Table 79. Importance of Quality Categories by Educational Level**

Quality Categories	< 4-Year	4-Year +	Total
<b>CAT 1 - Qualifications of the directors and teachers</b>	28.0%	25.8%	27.2%
<b>CAT 2 - Quality of the teacher-child interactions</b>	47.4%	50.7%	48.5%
<b>CAT 3 - How the program is managed</b>	10.0%	8.5%	9.5%
<b>CAT 4 - Quality of indoor and outdoor environments</b>	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	5.1%	5.6%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There are some differences among the household income cohorts. Respondents with a household income less than \$60,000 a year are less likely (44.6 percent) to identify teacher child interactions as the most important quality category, and the most likely to identify the qualifications of directors and teachers (31.0 percent) as the most important quality category.

Respondents with a household income between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year (51.9 percent) or more than \$90,000 a year (51.0 percent) are more likely to identify teacher-child interactions as the most important quality category, and less likely to identify qualifications of the directors and teachers.

**Table 80. Importance of Quality Categories by Income**

Quality Categories	< \$60,000	\$60 to \$90K	\$90,000 +	Total
<b>CAT 1 - Qualifications of the directors and teachers</b>	31.0%	22.0%	25.9%	27.2%
<b>CAT 2 - Quality of the teacher-child interactions</b>	44.6%	51.9%	51.0%	48.5%
<b>CAT 3 - How the program is managed</b>	9.3%	10.1%	9.4%	9.5%
<b>CAT 4 - Quality of indoor and outdoor environments</b>	8.9%	12.5%	8.9%	9.5%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	6.2%	3.5%	4.8%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There are statistically significant differences when comparing responses with how important respondents believe the previously tested factors are in choosing child care.

Respondents who believe a Nurturing Environment (63.8 percent), Flexible Hours (51.0 percent), and Safety (50.3 percent) are the most important factors when making decisions about child care are more likely to identify the quality of teacher-child interactions as the important quality category, while respondents who identify Affordability (44.1 percent) Proximity (36.4 percent), or Ready to Learn (32.7 percent) as the most important factor are less likely to identify teacher-child interactions as the most important quality category.

**Table 81. Importance of Quality Categories by Child Care Decision Factors**

Quality Categories	Safety	Affordability	Nurturing Environment	Proximity	Ready to Learn	Social Skills	Flexible Hours	Total
CAT 1	30.3%	27.8%	18.4%	33.2%	24.8%	14.7%	23.3%	27.2%
CAT 2	50.3%	44.1%	63.8%	36.4%	32.7%	49.8%	51.0%	48.5%
CAT 3	7.0%	12.7%	7.1%	7.7%	24.3%	10.9%	7.1%	9.5%
CAT 4	9.0%	8.0%	9.2%	15.0%	13.1%	11.7%	9.9%	9.5%
Don't know / Refused	3.4%	7.5%	1.5%	7.6%	5.1%	12.9%	8.7%	5.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

This is another instance where there is a difference in how families perceive the importance of different factors when choosing child care – with financial and some practical considerations affecting the choices families need to make and relating to how they evaluate quality.

#### Using Texas Rising Star

After being presented with everything in the survey, respondents were asked how likely they would be to use the Texas Rising Star quality ratings to identify high-quality child care programs near where they work or live.

Approximately three out of every four respondents (75.8 percent) across all subgroups indicate they will use Texas Rising Star to identify high-quality child care programs, and this uniformity indicates the exposure to information throughout the survey has a consistent effect on whether respondents will use Texas Rising Star.

**Table 82. Potential Use of Texas Rising Star**

Use of Texas Rising Star	Total
Total Likely	75.8%
Total Unlikely	17.3%
Net Likely	58.4%
Don't know / Refused	6.9%
Total	100.0%

#### Finding Financial Assistance Programs

Respondents were then given information about how families can receive financial assistance through their local Workforce Boards.

Texas Rising Star also provides information for families about opportunities to receive financial assistance to cover the costs of child care, and links to the local workforce boards across Texas which administer these assistance programs.

Respondents were asked if they would visit the Texas Rising Star website to learn more about financial assistance for child care services. 71.1 percent of respondents are likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs, while 24.6 percent are not.

**Table 83.** *Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance*

Finding Financial Assistance	Total
Total Likely	71.1%
Total Unlikely	24.6%
Net Likely	46.4%
Don't know / Refused	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents ages 18 to 34 (73.1 percent) and respondents 55 years old and older (78.4 percent) are the most likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

**Table 84.** *Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance by Age Cohort*

Finding Financial Assistance	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55+	Total
Total Likely	73.1%	69.6%	68.1%	78.4%	71.1%
Total Unlikely	23.3%	26.2%	27.5%	14.5%	24.6%
Net Likely	49.8%	43.4%	40.6%	63.9%	46.4%
Don't know / Refused	3.6%	4.2%	4.4%	7.2%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As shown throughout the survey – the oldest and youngest age cohorts are also the lowest income cohorts.

White respondents (61.3 percent) are the least likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs, while Black respondents (77.8 percent), Asian Respondents (76.9 percent), and Hispanic respondents (77.6 percent) are more likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

**Table 85.** *Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance by Racial Self-Identification*

Finding Financial Assistance	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Nat.Amer.	Other	Total
Total Likely	61.3%	77.8%	76.9%	77.6%	57.5%	80.2%	71.1%
Total Unlikely	34.9%	13.8%	19.9%	18.9%	42.5%	15.2%	24.6%
Net Likely	26.3%	64.0%	57.0%	58.8%	15.0%	64.9%	46.4%
Don't know / Refused	3.8%	8.3%	3.2%	3.5%	0.0%	4.6%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents with less than a four-year college degree (75.1 percent) are more likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs, while respondents with a four-year degree or more (63.5 percent) are less likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

**Table 86. Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance By Educational Attainment**

Finding Financial Assistance	< 4-Year	4-Year +	Total
Total Likely	75.1%	63.5%	71.1%
Total Unlikely	21.3%	30.8%	24.6%
Net Likely	53.8%	32.7%	46.4%
Don't know / Refused	3.6%	5.7%	4.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There are also difference responses based on household income. Respondents with a household income of less than \$60,000 a year (81.1 percent) are more likely than respondents with a household income between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year to use Texas Rising Start to identify financial assistance programs, while respondents with a household income of \$90,000 or more a year (61.3 percent) are the least likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

**Table 87. Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance by Income**

Finding Financial Assistance	< \$60,000	\$60 to \$90K	\$90,000 +	Total
Total Likely	81.1%	72.4%	61.3%	71.1%
Total Unlikely	13.2%	26.1%	34.5%	24.6%
Net Likely	67.9%	46.4%	26.8%	46.4%
Don't know / Refused	5.7%	1.5%	4.2%	4.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There are differences among the factors respondents view as important in making child care decisions.

Respondents identifying Safety (74.5 percent), Affordability (71.6 percent) and Flexible Hours (79.2 percent) are more likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs; while respondents identifying a Nurturing Environment (65.3 percent), Proximity (65.3 percent), helping children be Ready to Learn (62.7 percent), and helping children develop Social Skills (66.2 percent) are less likely to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

**Table 88. Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance by Child Care Decision Factors**

Finding Financial Assistance	Safety	Affordability	Nurturing Environment	Proximity	Ready to Learn	Social Skills	Flexible Hours	Total
Total Likely	74.6%	71.6%	65.3%	65.3%	62.7%	66.2%	79.2%	71.1%
Total Unlikely	22.0%	23.2%	30.2%	30.3%	34.7%	21.5%	17.9%	24.6%
Net Likely	52.6%	48.4%	35.1%	35.0%	28.0%	44.7%	61.4%	46.4%
Don't know / Refused	3.5%	5.2%	4.5%	4.4%	2.6%	12.3%	2.9%	4.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Respondents who were previously familiar with Texas Rising Star (76.7 percent) are more likely than those who were previously unfamiliar with Texas Rising Star (69.6 percent) to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

**Table 89.** *Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance by Texas Rising Star Awareness*

Finding Financial Assistance	Familiar	Unfamiliar	DK / REF	Total
<b>Total Likely</b>	76.7%	69.6%	71.3%	71.1%
<b>Total Unlikely</b>	20.2%	26.3%	14.1%	24.6%
<b>Net Likely</b>	56.4%	43.3%	57.2%	46.4%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	3.1%	4.1%	14.6%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Respondents willing to travel further or spend more (81.7 percent) are more likely than respondents who are unwilling to travel further and spend more (51.7 percent) to use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance programs.

**Table 90.** *Using the Texas Rising Star Website to Find Financial Assistance by Willingness to Travel Further and Spend More for child care*

Finding Financial Assistance	Yes	No	DK / REF	Total
<b>Total Likely</b>	81.7%	51.7%	69.2%	71.1%
<b>Total Unlikely</b>	16.9%	44.5%	19.5%	24.6%
<b>Net Likely</b>	64.8%	7.2%	49.8%	46.4%
<b>Don't know / Refused</b>	1.3%	3.8%	11.3%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Recommendations

Texas families need support in making child care decisions, and the Texas Rising Star program has an opportunity to become a trusted and effective resource. The research is designed to help stakeholders understand What to Say, How to Say It, and Who to Say It To.

### What to Say

At the point this research was conducted (June 2023), few families recognize the name of Texas Rising Star, and reported limited interaction or experience with the Texas Rising Star program. How well the Texas Rising Star program can help families connect with quality, affordable child care programs will be an important measurement moving into the future.

76.1 percent of respondents indicated they had not heard of the Texas Rising Star program, but after the program was described, 75.8 percent of respondents said they would use Texas Rising Star to identify child care programs, and 71.1 percent of respondents said they would use it to identify financial assistance opportunities.

The good news is most families are seeking solutions which align with the purpose and practices of the Texas Rising Star program. Families are seeking safe, affordable, and nurturing child care programs, and believe teacher-child interactions, the qualifications of child care program staff, how well a program is managed, and the quality of learning environments are important ways to measure quality in child care programs.

The challenge is to increase awareness – based on alignment. Once families learn about the Texas Rising Star program, and the availability of financial assistance to help cover the costs of child care, they are more interested in using Texas Rising Star to identify their options and inform their decisions.

### How to Say It

Content requires context. The qualitative research generated several suggestions for how to reach and connect with Texas families, and the survey validates many of these suggestions. While Word of Mouth is the most identified source of information, the hard truth is people are not talking about Texas Rising Star. The Texas Rising Star program must first generate greater awareness and leverage trust to become an indispensable resource to Texas families.

This means using a combination of tactics – paid, owned, and earned – in the coming months and years, to stimulate a narrative, drive commentary, and burnish the developing brand. This requires leveraging additional sources of information tested in the survey – information from the Texas Workforce Boards, the Texas Child Care Availability Portal, and others. A complementary approach of traditional and emerging methods of outreach will make engagement more effective.

### Who to Say It To

The survey demonstrates the particular necessity to reach specific audiences with relevant information. Texas is both large and diverse, so targeting communications to foster effective connections will maximize awareness and engagement between the Texas Rising Star program and the families it is designed to serve.

Texas families and those responsible for children under six years of age are younger and more female than the state's general population. The people who will benefit the most from what the Texas Rising Star program offers are generally less educated, have less income, and less urban than those who can afford and already have their children enrolled in formal child care programs.

Language also matters – both in terms of the literacy level used to promote the Texas Rising Star program, and in designing and delivering content in languages other than English. These choices are compounded by disparate levels of educational attainment among respondents under 35 years old and who are 55 years old and older in comparison to respondents between 35 and 55 (who have a higher level of education attainment). Effective message development will meet Texans where they are – and give them actionable support to make decisions for their families.

There are few specific recommendations:

1. **Help families identify and secure specialized child care services.** Nearly one in eight survey respondents have a child who needs specialized care, but they face significant challenges in identifying affordable and effective support. The combination of high costs and child care program staff lacking the training to provide specialized care leads families to rely on in-household child care solutions. Helping more Texas families understand their options and available benefits can both improve outcomes in specific situations and help increase general awareness of the Texas Rising Star program.

The qualitative research surfaced the suggestion – not tested in the survey – of including information about whether a child care program offers specialized care in the Texas Child Care Availability Portal. Whether included in the Availability Portal or not – there is a need for these families to access information, and it can be an effective partnership to better serve these families.

2. **Leverage Workforce Boards and the Texas Child Care Availability Portal.** While the prior qualitative research indicated Texas families are far more familiar with the Texas Workforce Boards than the Texas Rising Star program, the survey indicated it is the second-least-used source of information for families seeking child care programs. The qualitative research also surfaced positive reactions to the Availability Portal, yet it is currently the least-used resource for Texas families seeking child care programs.

Once families actually learn about Texas Rising Star, they make the connection pretty quickly. Over time, the goal should be for unaided recognition and use of information from Workforce Boards and the Availability Portal to increase. These entities and tool will be an important early step in fostering engagement and awareness.

3. **Promote financial incentives.** With Affordability being a concern for families, and 71.1 percent of respondents indicating they would use Texas Rising Star to identify financial assistance opportunities for their families, it's an important and easy alignment in the messaging.

As the administrators of financial assistance programs, the Workforce Boards are particularly well positioned to drive and share this message.

4. **Safety first.** The prior qualitative phases of this research project surfaced the importance of safety, with stakeholder interview and focus group participants identifying Safety as a necessary component of quality. Now the survey confirms it, with Safety being the top-testing factor families consider when making child care decisions, followed by Affordability, and a Nurturing Environment.

While Safety is not a formal component of the Texas Rising Star assessment, it needs to be acknowledged in messaging and promotion, and quickly linked to other ways the Texas Rising Star program can help families find quality programs for their children.

5. **Focus on growth.** Higher income and more educated families are more likely to have already enrolled their children in a formal child care program, but there are many more families who rely on in-household or informal child care settings.

While it is far from safe to assume the families who already send their children to formal child care programs fully understand all of their options, there is still more which can be done to encourage higher quality in formal child care programs by getting more people to use Texas Rising Star to guide their child care decisions. This means focusing on the economic, geographic, and demographic cohorts which need to learn more – in the context and languages they will recognize and appreciate.

6. **Acknowledge and act on outliers.** Not every family, parent, or guardian is in their 20s or 30s looking to balance work and family. Nearly one in seven respondents are seniors and/or grandparents with direct responsibility for a child under six years of age in their household.

There are a series of assumptions people can make based on the characteristics of a given cohort – which can sometimes be affected by additional factors like education attainment and household income. Thinking through how to effectively target people who on the surface may not appear to need Texas Rising Star will help drive awareness and engagement.

Overall, the Texas Rising Star program starts from a position of possibility. While initial, unaided awareness needs improvement, the information presented throughout the survey leads directly to higher awareness and respondents relate a strong intention to use Texas Rising Star to guide child care decisions and seek out financial assistance.

Effective program design will leverage greater awareness of and engagement in the Texas Rising Star programs by families across the state, which can lead to potentially broader involvement among child care programs across Texas.





## APPENDIX A – SURVEY SCRIPTS

[Intro] Hi, I'm calling from OS Research, with a short survey about important child care needs in Texas. We'd like to ask you a few questions about your area and are not trying to sell you anything.

Q1. Are you at least 18 years old and a resident of Texas?

1. Yes
2. No [TERMINATE]
3. Not Sure/Refused [TERMINATE]

Q2. Our research is focusing on child care – are you the parent or immediate guardian of a child under six years old?

1. Yes
2. No [TERMINATE]
3. Not Sure/Refused [TERMINATE]

Q3. If you don't mind – without using their names – can you tell us the ages of the children you are the parent or guardian of. For example, you may have two children, a boy who is seven, and a girl who is three. Please tell me the ages for each of the children under 18 in your household.

RECORD AND CODE

(Please indicate the number in each age group)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 0 through 17 months
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18 months through 2 years
- \_\_\_\_\_ three years through five years
- \_\_\_\_\_ Six years through 9 years
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ten years through 12 years
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13 years or over

Q4. What is the relationship of the child/children under six years old in your household to you?

1. Biological or adopted child
2. Sibling
3. Grandchild
4. Foster child
5. Other relative (e.g., niece or nephew)
6. Other nonrelative
7. DK/REF

Q5. Do any of the children under 6 years of age in your household have any diagnosed special needs, a disability, or a chronic medical condition requiring specialized child care services?

1. Yes – GO TO Q6
2. No - GO TO Q8

Q6. What type of specialized care, if any, does your child need?  
[RECORD AND TRANSCRIBE]

Q7. Has your child's diagnosis made it more difficult to find child care? Please tell us whether you have encountered any or all of these challenges.

1. There are no child care providers in my area with the proper training or experience in the specialized care my child needs.
2. The costs for the specialized care my child needs are too high.
3. [For Spanish Speakers] The places which provide specialized care don't provide child care in my child's language.
4. The child care provider in my area that could serve my child is full/not accepting new enrollments.

Now we'd like to ask you how you provide or manage child care for your child/children while you work or go to school. Some options may be: *you or your partner stay home, you rely on family or friends for informal care, use home-based or center-based child care programs - including those run by people you know, or may use a combination of approaches depending on your needs.*

Q8. In a typical week, what is your child care routine for your child/children under six years old? Are they: [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

1. Cared for by you or another parent or guardian in your household. Go To Q9
2. Cared for by other adults in your household. Go To Q9
3. Cared for by older siblings in your household. Go To Q9
4. Informally cared for by relatives or friends outside your household. Go To Q10
5. Formally cared for by a child care professional in a center or home. Go To Q11.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER – Families may use more than one solution to care for their child/children. If they indicate they use more than one, please record the number of days for each indicated response.

Q9. How many days a week do people in your household care for your child/children?

[RECORD RESPONSE, 1-7] GO TO Q15.

Q10. How many days a week do relatives or friends care for your child/children? GO TO Q12.

Q11. How many days a week do you have a child care center or child care home care for your child/children? GO TO Q14.

Q12. When your child/children is informally cared for by people outside your household do they receive money for looking after them?

1. Yes - GO TO Q13
2. No – GO TO Q13
3. DK/REF – GO TO Q13

Q13. Do you give them anything other than money in exchange for caring for your child/children? For example, do you provide groceries or transportation, or do work such as caring for children or small repair jobs in exchange for the care they provide?

1. Yes - GO TO Q14
2. No – GO TO Q14
3. DK/REF – GO TO Q14

Q14. [ONLY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE CARE OUTSIDE THE HOME] How do you usually take your child/children to your child care provider?

1. Walking or bicycle
2. Car
3. Public transportation
4. School bus
5. Other
6. DK/REF

These next questions are about how important you think different factors are when choosing child care for your family. For each, tell us whether it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

Q15. How important is it for a child care program to be close to where you live or work? Would you say the location is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

1. Very Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Neither Important or Unimportant
4. Somewhat Unimportant
5. Not Important at All
6. DK/REF

Q16. How important is affordability when choosing a child care program? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

1. Very Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Neither Important or Unimportant
4. Somewhat Unimportant

5. Not Important at All
6. DK/REF

Q17. How important is the flexibility of hours or days of operation when choosing a child care program? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

1. Very Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Neither Important or Unimportant
4. Somewhat Unimportant
5. Not Important at All
6. DK/REF

Q18. How important is safety when choosing a child care program? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

1. Very Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Neither Important or Unimportant
4. Somewhat Unimportant
5. Not Important at All
6. DK/REF

Q19. How important is it for a child care program to have a nurturing environment for your child/children? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

1. Very Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Neither Important or Unimportant
4. Somewhat Unimportant
5. Not Important at All
6. DK/REF

Q20. How important is it for a child care program to be able to help your child/children be ready to learn in school? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

1. Very Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Neither Important or Unimportant
4. Somewhat Unimportant
5. Not Important at All
6. DK/REF

Q21. How important is it for a child care program to be teach your child/children how to get along with other children? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, neither important nor important, somewhat unimportant, or not important at all.

1. Very Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Neither Important or Unimportant
4. Somewhat Unimportant
5. Not Important at All
6. DK/REF

Q22. And when thinking about all of these factors, which is the most important to you?

1. Location
2. Affordability
3. Flexibility of hours
4. Safety
5. Nurturing environment
6. School readiness
7. Helping children learn to get along with other children

Q23. Other than the factors mentioned above, is there any other information you would like to share about your child care situation; or do you have other needs which may impact how you choose child care. For example, some families need child care for hours outside the normal work day or week, or some families may be looking for specific program offerings in a child care program. If you have anything else you would like to share about what you look for or need, please share it now.

1. [TRANSCRIBE AND RECORD].
2. No
3. DK/REF

Now I would like to ask about the sources of information you use or have used to research and understand your options when considering child care for your family. For each, tell me whether you rely on this source of information a lot, a little, or not at all.

[RANDOMIZE]

- Q24. Word of mouth – information from friends and family
- Q25. Online reviews of child care programs
- Q26. Comments and reviews on social media platforms
- Q27. Tours of child care programs
- Q28. Licensing and regulation information
- Q29. Texas Child Care Availability Portal
- Q30. Information from local workforce boards

[END RANDOMIZATION]

Q31. Have you ever heard of the Texas Rising Star Program?

1. Yes [GO TO Q32]
2. No [GO TO Q34]
3. DK/REF

Q32. Have you used the Texas Rising Star quality-rating system to identify child care options for your child/children?

1. Yes [GO TO Q33]
2. No [GO TO Q34]
3. DK/REF

Q33. If your child currently attends a Texas Rising Star certified child care program, does the Texas Rising Star rating for your child's/children's care program match your expectations for the quality of the program?

1. Yes
2. No
3. DK/REF

**[READ TO ALL]**

Please let me the Texas Rising Star program to make sure you know what it is. The United States Department of Health and Human Services has developed standards for setting quality ratings and standards for improvement in child care. Here in Texas, that program is called Texas Rising Star and is managed under the Texas Workforce Commission.

Texas Rising Star rates child care programs using a Star system starting at entry-level and then assigning a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star rating. Child Care programs are assessed every year, and Texas Rising Star provides resources to child care programs to help them improve or maintain their ratings.

Q34. If you know a child care program is certified as a Texas Rising Star program, would your family travel further each day or be willing to pay a bit more to place them in a quality-rated program?

1. Yes
2. No
3. DK/REF

Texas Rising Star identifies standards for what would be a high-quality child care program, based on four categories – the qualifications of the directors and teachers of the programs, the quality of the teacher-child interactions, how the program is managed, and the quality of their indoor and outdoor environments.

Q35. Which of these categories is most important to you in determining high-quality child care?

1. Qualifications of the directors and teachers of the programs,
2. Quality of the teacher-child interactions,

3. How the program is managed,
4. Quality of their indoor and outdoor environments
5. DK/REF

Q36. Having heard all of this information how likely are you to use the Texas Rising Star quality ratings to identify high-quality child care programs near where you work or live?

1. Very Likely
2. Somewhat Likely
3. Somewhat Unlikely
4. Very Unlikely
5. DK/REF

Texas Rising Star also provides information for families about opportunities to receive financial assistance to cover the costs of child care, and links to the local workforce boards across Texas which administer these assistance programs.

Q37. How likely are you to visit the Texas Rising Star website to learn more about financial assistance for child care services?

1. Very Likely
2. Somewhat Likely
3. Somewhat Unlikely
4. Very Unlikely
5. DK/REF

We will now collect demographic information that will only be used to help us understand if we have a survey sample that is representative of the state population.

Q38. Please tell us your age range.

1. 18 to 24
2. 25 to 35
2. 35 to 44
3. 45 to 54
4. 55 to 64
5. 65 or older
6. DK/REF

Q39. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

1. Yes
2. No
3. DK/REF

Q40. Please tell us your race (can select more than one).

1. American Indian or Alaska Native
2. Asian



3. Black or African-American
4. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
5. White
6. Other, please share:
7. DK/REF

Q41. For statistical purposes, please confirm your gender

1. Female
2. Male
3. Non-binary
4. Other
5. DK/REF

Q42. Thanks, please tell us the highest level of education you obtained.

1. High school or less
2. Some college
3. Associate degree
4. Four year college degree
5. Some graduate work after college
6. A PhD, an MD, or a law degree
7. DK/REF

Q43. Please share your ZIP CODE.

Q44. Finally, please tell us whether your household income falls into one of these categories:

1. Under \$30,000 a year
2. Between \$30,000 and \$60,000 a year
3. Between \$60,000 and \$90,000 a year
4. Between \$90,000 and \$120,000 a year
5. More than \$120,000 a year

[END CALL] This ends our survey. Thank you for your participation. Goodbye

[Intro] ¡Hola! Llamo de parte de OS Research para realizar una breve encuesta sobre las necesidades importantes de cuidado infantil en Texas. Nos gustaría hacerle algunas preguntas sobre su área y no estamos tratando de venderle nada.

P1. ¿Tiene al menos 18 años y es residente de Texas?

1. Sí
2. No [TERMINAR]
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder [TERMINAR]

P2. Nuestra investigación se centra en el cuidado infantil. ¿Es usted el padre o tutor inmediato de un niño menor de seis años?

1. Sí
2. No [TERMINAR]
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder [TERMINAR]

P3. Si no le importa, sin mencionar sus nombres, ¿puede decirnos las edades de los niños de los cuales es padre o tutor? Por ejemplo, puede tener dos hijos, un niño de siete años y una niña de tres años. Por favor, indíqueme las edades de cada uno de los niños menores de 18 años en su hogar.

#### REGISTRAR Y CODIFICAR

(Por favor, indique el número en cada grupo de edad)

- \_\_\_\_\_ De 0 a 17 meses
- \_\_\_\_\_ De 18 meses a 2 años
- \_\_\_\_\_ De tres a cinco años
- \_\_\_\_\_ De seis a nueve años
- \_\_\_\_\_ De diez a doce años
- \_\_\_\_\_ De 13 años en adelante

P4. ¿Cuál es la relación del niño/los niños menores de seis años en su hogar con usted?

1. Hijo biológico o adoptado
2. Hermano/a
3. Nieto/a
4. Hijo/a de crianza
5. Otro pariente (por ejemplo, sobrino/a)
6. Otro sin relación de parentesco
7. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

Q5. ¿Alguno de los niños menores de 6 años en su hogar tiene alguna necesidad especial diagnosticada, una discapacidad o una condición médica crónica que requiera servicios de cuidado infantil especializados?

Sí: IR A P6

No: IR A P8

P6. ¿Qué tipo de cuidado especializado, en caso de haber, necesita su hijo/a?

[REGISTRAR Y TRANSCRIBIR]

P7. ¿El diagnóstico de su hijo/a ha dificultado encontrar cuidado infantil? Por favor, indíquenos si ha enfrentado alguno o todos estos desafíos.

1. No hay proveedores de cuidado infantil en mi área con la formación o experiencia adecuada en el cuidado especializado que mi hijo/a necesita.
2. Los costos del cuidado especializado que mi hijo/a necesita son demasiado altos.
3. [Para hablantes de español] Los lugares que ofrecen cuidado especializado no brindan atención en el idioma de mi hijo/a.
4. El proveedor de cuidado infantil en mi área que podría atender a mi hijo/a está lleno y no acepta nuevas inscripciones.

Ahora nos gustaría preguntarle cuáles son sus decisiones en el cuidado infantil para su hijo/a/mientras usted trabaja o va a la escuela. Algunas opciones pueden ser: usted o su pareja se quedan en casa, depende de familiares o amigos para cuidado informal, utiliza programas de cuidado infantil ya sea en un centro o un hogar de cuidado infantil, incluidos aquellos dirigidos por personas conocidas, o puede utilizar una combinación de enfoques según sus necesidades.

P8. En una semana típica, ¿cuál es su rutina de cuidado infantil para su hijo/a/menores de seis años?

[SELECCIONE TODAS LAS QUE CORRESPONDAN]

1. Cuidados por usted u otro padre o tutor en su hogar. Ir a P9.
2. Cuidados por otros adultos en su hogar. Ir a P9.
3. Cuidados por hermanos/as mayores en su hogar. Ir a P9.
4. Cuidados de forma informal por familiares o amigos fuera de su hogar. Ir a P10.
5. Cuidados de forma formal por un profesional de cuidado infantil en un centro o en un hogar. Ir a P11.

NOTA PARA EL ENTREVISTADOR: Las familias pueden utilizar más de una solución para el cuidado de sus hijos. Si indican que utilizan más de una opción, por favor, registre el número de días para cada respuesta indicada.

P9. ¿Cuántos días a la semana otras personas en su hogar cuidan de su hijo/a?

[REGISTRE LA RESPUESTA, 1-7] IR A P15.

P10. ¿Cuántos días a la semana familiares o amigos cuidan de su hijo/a? IR A P12.

P11. ¿Cuántos días a la semana deja a su hijo/a en un centro de cuidado infantil o un hogar de cuidado infantil? IR A P14.

P12. Cuando su hijo/a es cuidado de forma informal fuera de su hogar por otras personas ¿Les pagan por cuidarlos?

1. Sí - IR A P13
2. No - IR A P13
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder - IR A P13

P13. ¿Les da algo además de dinero a cambio de cuidar de su hijo/a? Por ejemplo, ¿proporciona alimentos o transporte, o realiza tareas como cuidar de sus hijos o pequeñas reparaciones a cambio del cuidado que brindan?

1. Sí - IR A P14
2. No - IR A P14
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder - IR A P14

P14. [SOLO PARA AQUELLOS CON CUIDADO FUERA DEL HOGAR] ¿Cómo suele llevar a su hijo/a al centro de cuidado infantil?

1. Caminando o en bicicleta
2. Auto
3. Transporte público
4. Autobús escolar
5. Otro
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

Las siguientes preguntas se refieren a la importancia que usted considera que tienen diferentes factores al elegir el cuidado infantil para su familia. Para cada uno, indíquenos si es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto.

P15. ¿Qué tan importante es que un programa de cuidado infantil esté cerca de donde usted vive o trabaja? ¿Diría que la ubicación es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto?

1. Muy importante

2. Algo importante
3. Ni importante ni no importante
4. No tan importante
5. No importante en absoluto
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P16. ¿Qué tan importante es el costo al elegir un programa de cuidado infantil? ¿Diría que es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto?

1. Muy importante
2. Algo importante
3. Ni importante ni no importante
4. No tan importante
5. No importante en absoluto
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P17. ¿Qué tan importante es la flexibilidad en cuanto a horarios o días de funcionamiento al elegir un programa de cuidado infantil? ¿Diría que es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto?

1. Muy importante
2. Algo importante
3. Ni importante ni no importante
4. No tan importante
5. No importante en absoluto
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P18. ¿Qué tan importante es la seguridad al elegir un programa de cuidado infantil? ¿Diría que es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto?

1. Muy importante
2. Algo importante
3. Ni importante ni no importante
4. No tan importante
5. No importante en absoluto
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P19. ¿Qué tan importante es que un programa de cuidado infantil ofrezca un ambiente enriquecedor para su hijo/a? ¿Diría que es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto?

1. Muy importante
2. Algo importante
3. Ni importante ni no importante
4. No tan importante
5. No importante en absoluto
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P20. ¿Qué tan importante es que un programa de cuidado infantil ayude a su hijo/a a estar preparado/a para cuando comiencen la escuela? ¿Diría que es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto?

1. Muy importante
2. Algo importante
3. Ni importante ni no importante
4. No tan importante
5. No importante en absoluto
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P21. ¿Qué tan importante es que un programa de cuidado infantil enseñe a su hijo/a a llevarse bien con otros niños? ¿Diría que es muy importante, algo importante, ni importante ni no importante, no tan importante o no importante en absoluto?

1. Muy importante
2. Algo importante
3. Ni importante ni no importante
4. No tan importante
5. No importante en absoluto
6. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P22. Y al considerar todos estos factores, ¿cuál es el más importante para usted?

1. Ubicación
2. Accesibilidad económica
3. Flexibilidad de horarios
4. Seguridad
5. Entorno enriquecedor
6. Preparación escolar
7. Ayudar a los niños a llevarse bien con otros niños

P23. Además de los factores mencionados anteriormente, ¿hay alguna otra información que le gustaría compartir sobre su situación de cuidado infantil? ¿O tiene otras necesidades que podrían afectar cómo elige el cuidado infantil? Por ejemplo, algunas familias necesitan cuidado infantil en horarios fuera del horario de trabajo normal, o algunas familias pueden estar buscando ciertos

enfoques específicos de cuidado infantil. Si tiene algo más que le gustaría compartir sobre lo que busca o necesita, por favor, compártalo ahora.

1. [TRANSCRIBIR Y REGISTRAR].
2. No
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

Ahora me gustaría preguntarle sobre las fuentes de información que utiliza o ha utilizado para investigar y elegir sus opciones al considerar el cuidado infantil para su familia. Para cada una, indíqueme si confía mucho, un poco o en absoluto en esta fuente de información.

[ALEATORIZAR]

P24. Recomendaciones de boca en boca: información de amigos y familiares.

P25. Reseñas del internet de programas de cuidado infantil.

P26. Comentarios y reseñas en plataformas de redes sociales.

P27. Visitas a programas de cuidado infantil.

P28. Información sobre licencias y regulaciones.

P29. Portal de Disponibilidad de Cuidado Infantil de Texas.

P30. Información de la junta local de fuerza laboral (Workforce Board)

[FIN DE LA ALEATORIZACIÓN]

P31. ¿Alguna vez has oído hablar del Programa Texas Rising Star?

1. Sí [IR A P32]
2. No [IR A P34]
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P32. ¿Has utilizado el sistema de calificación de calidad de Texas Rising Star para identificar opciones de cuidado infantil para tu hijo/hijos?

1. Sí [IR A P33]
2. No [IR A P34]
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P33. Si tu hijo/hijos actualmente asisten a un programa de cuidado infantil certificado por Texas Rising Star, ¿coincide la calificación de Texas Rising Star con tus expectativas sobre la calidad del programa?

1. Sí
2. No
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

[LEER PARA TODOS]

Por favor, permítame explicarle el programa Texas Rising Star para asegurarme de que sepa de qué se trata. El Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de los Estados Unidos ha desarrollado estándares para establecer calificaciones de calidad y estándares de mejora en el cuidado infantil. Aquí en Texas, ese programa se llama Texas Rising Star y es administrado por la Comisión de Fuerza Laboral de Texas (Texas Workforce Commission).

Texas Rising Star califica los programas de cuidado infantil utilizando un sistema de estrellas, comenzando en el nivel de entrada y luego asignando una calificación de Dos, Tres o Cuatro Estrellas. Los programas de cuidado infantil se evalúan cada año, y Texas Rising Star proporciona recursos a los programas de cuidado infantil para ayudarles a mejorar o mantener sus calificaciones.

P34. Si supiera que un programa de cuidado infantil está certificado como un programa Texas Rising Star, ¿tu familia viajaría más lejos cada día o estaría dispuesta a pagar un poco más para colocarlos en un programa de alta calidad?

1. Sí
2. No
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

Texas Rising Star identifica estándares para lo que sería un programa de cuidado infantil de alta calidad, basado en cuatro categorías: las calificaciones de los directores y maestros de los programas, la calidad de las interacciones entre maestros y niños, la forma en que se administra el programa y la calidad de sus entornos interiores y exteriores.

P35. ¿Cuál de estas categorías es la más importante para ti al determinar un cuidado infantil de alta calidad?

1. Cualificaciones de los directores y maestros de los programas.
2. Calidad de las interacciones entre maestros y niños.
3. Forma en que se administra el programa.
4. Calidad de los entornos interiores y exteriores.
5. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P36. Después de haber escuchado toda esta información, ¿qué tan probable es que utilices las calificaciones de calidad de Texas Rising Star para identificar programas de cuidado infantil de alta calidad cerca de donde trabajas o vives?

1. Muy probable
2. Bastante probable



3. Poco probable
4. Muy poco probable
5. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

Texas Rising Star también brinda información a las familias sobre oportunidades para recibir asistencia financiera para cubrir los costos de los servicios de cuidado infantil y enlaces a la junta local de fuerza laboral en todo Texas que administran estos programas de asistencia.

P37. ¿Qué tan probable es que visites el sitio web de Texas Rising Star para obtener más información sobre la asistencia financiera para los servicios de cuidado infantil?

1. Muy probable
2. Bastante probable
3. Poco probable
4. Muy poco probable
5. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

Ahora recopilaremos información demográfica que solo se utilizará para ayudarnos a comprender si tenemos una muestra de encuesta que sea representativa de la población estatal.

P38. Por favor, indícanos tu rango de edad.

1. 18 a 24 años
2. 25 a 35 años
3. 35 a 44 años
4. 45 a 54 años
5. 55 a 64 años
6. 65 años o más
7. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P39. ¿Eres de origen hispano, latino o español?

1. Sí
2. No
3. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P40. Por favor, indica tu raza (puedes seleccionar más de una).

1. Indígena americano o nativo de Alaska
2. Asiático
3. Negro o afroamericano

4. Nativo de Hawái u otro isleño del Pacífico
5. Blanco
6. Otro, por favor especifica:
7. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P41. Por motivos estadísticos, por favor confirma tu género.

1. Femenino
2. Masculino
3. No binario
4. Otro
5. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P42. Gracias, por favor indícanos el nivel educativo más alto que has obtenido.

1. Educación secundaria o menos
2. Algo de estudios universitarios
3. Título Técnico
4. Licenciatura
5. Algunos estudios de posgrado después de la licenciatura
6. Doctorado, doctorado en medicina o grado de derecho
7. No estoy seguro/Me niego a responder

P43. Por favor, comparte tu código postal.

P44. Por último, indícanos en qué categoría de ingresos familiares se encuentra tu hogar:

1. Menos de \$30,000 al año
2. Entre \$30,000 y \$60,000 al año
3. Entre \$60,000 y \$90,000 al año
4. Entre \$90,000 y \$120,000 al año
5. Más de \$120,000 al año

[FINALIZAR LLAMADA] Esto concluye nuestra encuesta. Gracias por tu participación. Adiós.



## APPENDIX B – SUMMATIVE ANALYSIS

## Quality Control and Analysis

Participation in public opinion research has dramatically decreased over the past decade, with fewer people answering unsolicited phone calls, or from numbers they do not recognize. It is particularly challenging to collect data from younger respondents – who are also far less likely to have ever used a landline, and whose phone numbers change more frequently than older respondents.

Research design therefore requires using a range of call tactics to ensure representative data collection. Current approaches with live calls allow for the automated and predictive dialing of land line telephones, but require a form of human interaction for mobile telephones – either completely dialing the number, or hitting “call” each time a number is ready to be dialed.

There are also many new innovations with digital data collection. One is the transmission of an Internet to an online survey platform via email or text message (SMS/MMS), the use of QR-Code technology, or by sharing the link through physical collateral to engage potential respondents. Another is the use of SMS texting, where respondents are texted questions and given the opportunity to respond one or two questions at a time.

Data collection can also be conducted through Interactive Voice Response (IVR), where respondents have the ability to use their keypad to enter responses by selecting a numeric value corresponding to their choice. This limits the ability to collect verbal or open-ended responses, and by law, can only be conducted with land line telephones, not mobile telephones.

There are also completely analog methods of collection. Door-to-door surveys were once the gold standard for data collection, in-person intercepts at specific locations, or paper surveys, which can be distributed in a personal setting or mailed to targeted or bulk audiences to generate sufficient responses.

Each of these approaches has limitations associated with participation bias, access to technology, the accessibility of the survey platform or methodology, the literacy levels of the target populations, or the languages needed to collect data.

### The Texas Rising Star Methodology

This survey explores matters some families may consider sensitive – the decisions families make around child care. Anticipating many families could be reluctant to share information about how they care for their children, Outreach Strategists recommended a research design utilizing a professional phone bank of live callers, who would have the training to keep families engaged when exploring sensitive topics.

Live calls are the most expensive method of data collection, but by no means the only method available. Therefore, in parallel to planned research design, Outreach Strategists deployed SMS data collection to measure comparative rates of completion, and to identify whether SMS could be used as a replacement for or complement to data collection in the future. In this summative exercise, respondents were asked to complete the survey through a text message sharing a link to an online survey platform.

Comparing the data from both collection processes is limited to the questions asked of all participants – the branching logic is excluded because it does not demonstrate the effect of those questions on the full sample.

## Data Collection

Using professional live callers, and a commercially secured phone list of land lines and cell phones, the data collection process attempted calls to 469,965 phone numbers, leaving 251,426 voice mail messages, and reaching 68,304 live respondents. Among these, 1,913 respondents started the survey, with 1,243 completions, for 670 partial responses.

In parallel, there were 50,000 text attempts to a randomized sample of Texas cell phone numbers. 3,530 respondents started the survey, with 49 completions, for 3,481 partial responses

**Table C1 – Comparison of Partial Responses by Survey Section**

	QUESTION	SMS Partial Responses	Response Rate	Live Partial Responses	Response Rate
SCRN	Texas Residency	3481	100.0%	670	100.0%
	Has a child under six	626	18.0%	670	100.0%
CHILD CARE CHOICES	Number of Children Under 18	449	12.9%	606	90.4%
	Relationship to Child	402	11.5%	266	39.7%
	Requires Special Needs	402	11.5%	243	36.3%
	Child Care Setting	305	8.8%	164	24.5%
	Days of Care Each Week	290	8.3%	146	21.8%
FACTORS IN CHOOSING CHILD CARE	Q15 - Location	144	4.1%	96	14.3%
	Q16 - Affordability	144	4.1%	86	12.8%
	Q17 - Hours	144	4.1%	74	11.0%
	Q18 - Safety	144	4.1%	75	11.2%
	Q19 - Nurturing Environment	144	4.1%	70	10.4%
	Q20 - Ready for School	144	4.1%	65	9.7%
	Q21 - Social Skills	144	4.1%	63	9.4%
	Most Important Factor	144	4.1%	55	8.2%
SOURCES OF INFORMATION	Q24 - Word of Mouth	96	2.8%	25	3.7%
	Q25 - Online Reviews	96	2.8%	24	3.6%
	Q26 - Social Media Plaforms	96	2.8%	22	3.3%
	Q27 - Tours	96	2.8%	24	3.6%
	Q28 - Licensing Info	96	2.8%	22	3.3%
	Q29 - Portal	96	2.8%	22	3.3%
	Q30 - Local Workforce Boards	96	2.8%	25	3.7%
TESTING TEXAS RISING STAR	Have You Heard of Texas Rising Star?	94	2.7%	19	2.8%
	Travel Further or Pay a Little More?	22	0.6%	7	1.0%
	Quality Categories	22	0.6%	7	1.0%
	Use Texas Rising Star to Find Child Care	22	0.6%	7	1.0%
	Use Texas Rising Star to Find Financial Assistance	22	0.6%	6	0.9%
DEMOGRAPHICS	Age	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Combined Self-Identified Race & Ethnicity	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Gender	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Education	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	ZIP Code	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Income	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Language	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

## Participation

Among the 68,304 initial live call respondents, there were 1,913 respondents to the initial question (2.8 percent participation), and among the 50,000 initial SMS targets there were 3,530 initial SMS respondents (7.1 percent participation). The participation rate among SMS targets is higher, because the only way to measure their participation is whether they responded to the initial SMS message.

## Screening Questions

The response rates for SMS responses drop dramatically after the first question – from 100 percent to 18 percent (626 respondents). With live calls, all 670 partial responses get through first two questions.

**Table C2 – Partial Responses for Screening Questions**

	QUESTION	SMS Partial Responses	Response Rate	Live Partial Responses	Response Rate
SCRN	Texas Residency	3481	100.0%	670	100.0%
	Has a child under six	626	18.0%	670	100.0%

## Child Care Choices

When respondents are asked to share details about children in their home, response rates drop. SMS respondents drop by more than half at the end of this section (from 626 respondents in the screening questions to 290 respondents), while live call respondents drop by more than three quarters (from 670 respondents to 146 respondents).

**Table C3 – Partial Responses for Questions about Child Care Circumstances**

	QUESTION	SMS Partial Responses	Response Rate	Live Partial Responses	Response Rate
CHILD CARE CHOICES	Number of Children Under 18	449	12.9%	606	90.4%
	Relationship to Child	402	11.5%	266	39.7%
	Requires Special Needs	402	11.5%	243	36.3%
	Child Care Setting	305	8.8%	164	24.5%
	Days of Care Each Week	290	8.3%	146	21.8%

There is a greater drop among SMS respondents. Live callers may have been able to keep respondents on the phone during probing on the sensitive subject areas, but there is still a substantial drop from the first to second questions in this section.

There is also a marked drop after asking about the number of days the respondents used each form of child care.

## Factors in Choosing Child Care

Respondents were shared a list of factors they consider when making child care decisions, and

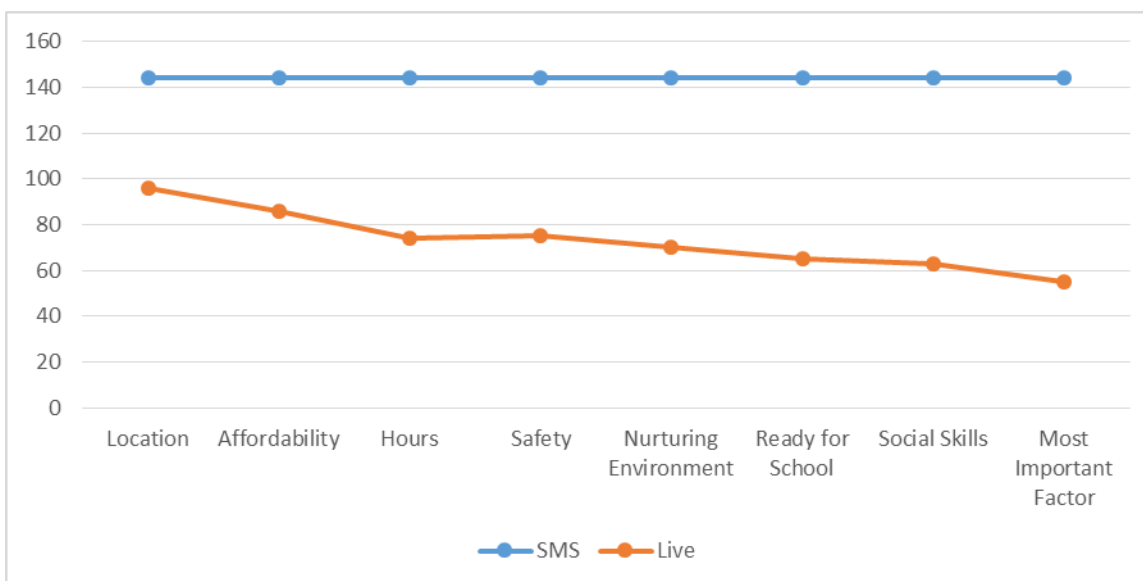
SMS responses drop to 144 (4.1 percent) for the SMS responses across all questions. This is likely because the questions were provided in a block to respondents in the online survey platform, which only recorded completions of all eight questions. Responses dropped across the live calls because they were sequential, and participants could leave as they chose.

**Table C4 – Partial Responses for Factors in Choosing Child Care**

	QUESTION	SMS Partial Responses	Response Rate	Live Partial Responses	Response Rate
FACTORS IN CHOOSING CHILD CARE	Q15 - Location	144	4.1%	96	14.3%
	Q16 - Affordability	144	4.1%	86	12.8%
	Q17 - Hours	144	4.1%	74	11.0%
	Q18 - Safety	144	4.1%	75	11.2%
	Q19 - Nurturing Environment	144	4.1%	70	10.4%
	Q20 - Ready for School	144	4.1%	65	9.7%
	Q21 - Social Skills	144	4.1%	63	9.4%
	Most Important Factor	144	4.1%	55	8.2%

The online survey platform did not track where partial participants may have dropped off along Questions 15 through 21, and there is a steady, if incremental reduction in participation across the eight questions among live call responses.

**Chart C1 – Partial Responses for Factors in Choosing Child Care – Completed Questions**



This section was not randomized, so there is a steady reduction across the questions. The gradual reduction among live call respondents is likely a result of survey length impacting participation, as there are not specific dips which trigger drop-off. Had this question bank been randomized, there likely would have been a more even distribution of responses among live callers.

**Sources of Information**

Participation usually drops at transition points in surveys, and there are large drops in the transition to asking about the sources of information families use in making child care decisions. Responses among SMS respondents dropped to 96 across this section from 144 in the prior section of questions, while response among live calls varied from 22 to 25, down from 55 questions in the prior section. This section of questions was randomized across the seven sources of information. On the SMS online survey platform, this section again was presented as a block of questions.

**Table C5 – Partial Responses for Sources of Information**

	QUESTION	SMS Partial Responses	Response Rate	Live Partial Responses	Response Rate
SOURCES OF INFORMATION	Q24 - Word of Mouth	96	2.8%	25	3.7%
	Q25 - Online Reviews	96	2.8%	24	3.6%
	Q26 - Social Media Plaforms	96	2.8%	22	3.3%
	Q27 - Tours	96	2.8%	24	3.6%
	Q28 - Licensing Info	96	2.8%	22	3.3%
	Q29 - Portal	96	2.8%	22	3.3%
	Q30 - Local Workforce Boards	96	2.8%	25	3.7%

The reason completed responses range from 25 to 22 among the live call responses is because the questions were presented in a randomized order. Questions 26, 28, and 29 were likely at the end of the randomized order with a greater frequency, and consequently have fewer responses.

### Testing Texas Rising Star

The transition to Texas Rising Star holds respondents relatively well. Respondents were asked whether they had heard of Texas Rising Star. SMS responses dropped from 96 to 94, and live call responses dropped from 22 to 19.

Respondents were then presented with a description of Texas Rising Star, and participation dropped from 94 to 22 among SMS respondents and from 19 to 7 or 6 among live call respondents

**Table C6 – Partial Responses for Testing Texas Rising Star**

	QUESTION	SMS Partial Responses	Response Rate	Live Partial Responses	Response Rate
TESTING TEXAS RISING STAR	Have You Heard of Texas Rising Star?	94	2.7%	19	2.8%
	Travel Further or Pay a Little More?	22	0.6%	7	1.0%
	Quality Categories	22	0.6%	7	1.0%
	Use Texas Rising Star to Find Child Care	22	0.6%	7	1.0%
	Use Texas Rising Star to Find Financial Assistance	22	0.6%	6	0.9%

The survey was already stretching the limits of duration, and the length of the description of the Texas Rising Star program negatively impacted further participation.

### Demographics

Responses dropped again when shifting to the demographics section. None of the SMS participants responded to any of the demographic questions. Two live call respondents answered questions about Age, Race and Ethnicity, Gender, and Education, but did not stay on for geography, or Income. Language was determined by the observed or selected language within the survey.



**Table C7 – Partial Responses for Demographics**

	QUESTION	SMS Partial Responses	Response Rate	Live Partial Responses	Response Rate
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	Age	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Combined Self-Identified Race & Ethnicity	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Gender	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	Education	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
	ZIP Code	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Income	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Language	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

**Observations**

The comparison across data collection methods indicates similar rates of drop-off throughout the survey at each point of transition. While the SMS platform presented some of the sections as a group of questions - rather than one at a time - there were several moments where participation dropped.

The most dramatic reduction is at the beginning of the survey – when respondents were asked to share information about their children. These drops will remain a challenge in future research. There probably needs to be a longer and more thorough explanation at the beginning of the survey of what information is being sought, and how sharing personal or sensitive information can benefit respondents and people like them. Most importantly, future surveys will have to reassure participants their information will be kept confidential to improve response rates.

The second large drop is in the transition to factors about child care. The fact this block was not randomized in the live call data collection indicates the gradual drop-off as questions continued. There are always tensions in a balancing length and completeness, and at the mid-point of this survey, there are already signals of diminishing participation.

The last big drop occurred in the context of the description of Texas Rising Star – between questions 33 and 34. While the description was relatively short (71 words), more than half of the live call respondents and three quarters of SMS respondents dropped off after the description. Sometimes it is simply a matter of patience – so perhaps the longer questions need to come earlier in the survey.

While demographic questions can also be a challenge, they are essential in measuring the frequency and distribution of findings across relevant subgroups, and must always be retained.

Family decisions can be sensitive. Professional phone callers can keep participants on the phone through friendly tones, encouraging participation, and signaling progress throughout the survey. While using SMS platforms may be less time-consuming, they cannot replace the human effect live callers can have.

With 49 completed surveys, it would take casting a much wider net than used for live calls to complete data collection. SMS strategies have their place – as a complement to live call data collection – but cannot replace live calls when dealing with sensitive topics and when performing lengthy research exercises.



## APPENDIX C – SELECT CROSSTAB TABLES















































































































