



WISCONSIN EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

2021 RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

In the fall of 2021, DCF surveyed nearly 1,000 Wisconsin employers from every county in the state, across a wide range of industries. The goal was to better understand their perceptions about early care and education for children between birth and age 5, as well as what barriers businesses face in supporting employees' child care needs. Gaining insight into their perspectives can help us connect Wisconsin business owners with the child care information and community-based resources they—and their employees—need to thrive.

Research conducted by KW2 was fielded in November-December 2021 and included 979 responses.



What did Wisconsin employers select as the top reasons to explore child and family-supporting benefits?

64%

It's a way to retain valuable employees

54%

My employees are more productive when their children's needs are met

38%

It's less disruptive to the company because employees aren't working inconsistent hours or leaving

34%

It's a way to attract quality talent to my organization

EMPLOYERS BELIEVE CHILD CARE IS VITAL TO THE ECONOMY, BUT NOT AS STRONGLY AS EMPLOYEES.



Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements.

It's important for Wisconsin businesses to support child care for their employees.



Providing employees with resources to support their child care needs is a strategy that all employers should consider to address workforce/labor shortages.



Wisconsin's economy is impacted by families' abilities to access affordable, high-quality child care.



Without access to affordable early child care, Wisconsin businesses will face workforce/labor shortages now and in the future.





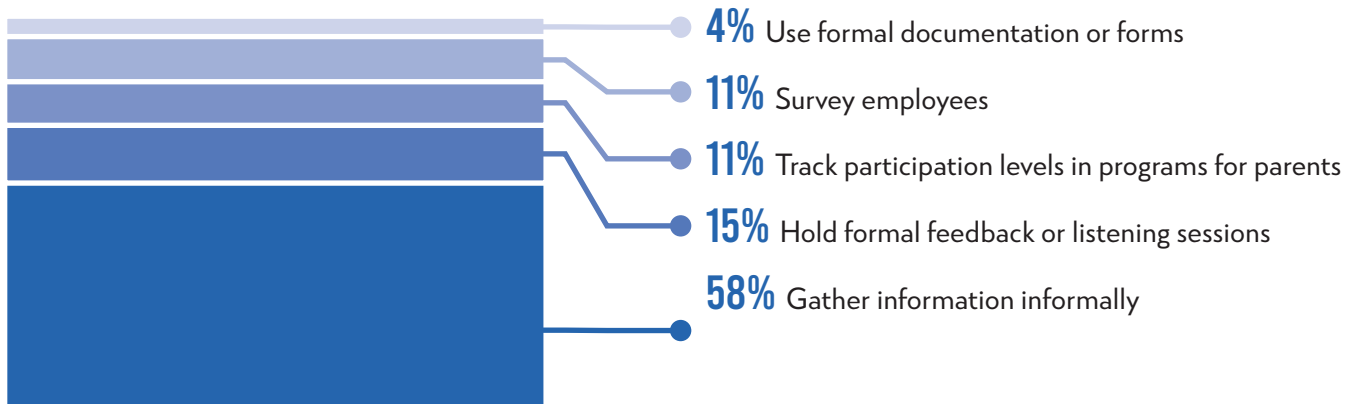
58% of participants said that COVID-19 had decreased their employees' access to quality child care. They reported employees' lack of access to child care over the last 12 months contributed to:

- Employees changing or reducing hours: **45%**
- Difficulty hiring new employees: **43%**
- Employees taking more paid leave: **43%**
- Employees taking more unpaid leave: **42%**
- Employees leaving the workforce (temporarily or permanently): **34%**
- Employees working remotely: **31%**
- Lost revenue due to staffing shortages: **20%**
- Employees changing roles for greater flexibility: **19%**
- Reduced hours or business closures due to staffing shortages: **15%**
- Other impacts (primarily reduced productivity or bringing a child/children to work): **4%**

EMPLOYERS HAVE FELT THE IMPACT OF CHILD CARE CHALLENGES AND THINK THEY'RE AWARE OF EMPLOYEES' NEEDS, BUT DO NOT FORMALLY CAPTURE THEM.



62% of participants said they are very aware of their employees' parenting and child care needs, but most participants rely on informal conversations between employees and their supervisors or human resources specialists to gather information about employees' needs.

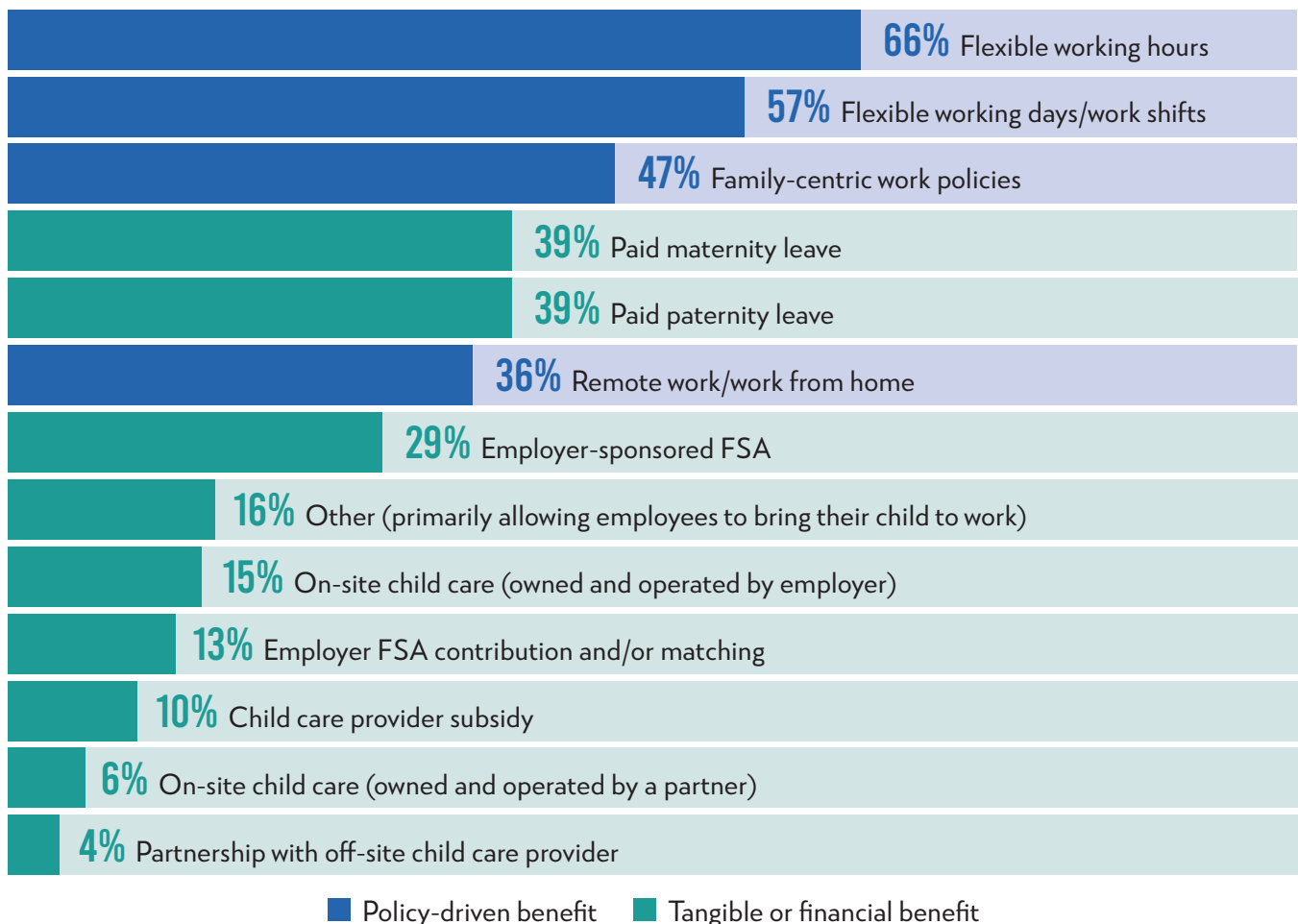


This matters, because employers who use formal methods were **7%** more likely to say they're very aware of their employees' parenting and child care needs than those using informal methods. Several surveys are underway across Wisconsin to look at local data around employee needs for child care. Project Growth also offers a sample Survey on Employee Needs for Child Care that can be customized and employers, available at ProjectGrowth.WI.gov

WISCONSIN EMPLOYERS ARE MISSING AN OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER TANGIBLE, FINANCIAL SUPPORTS TO EMPLOYEES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN.



OVER HALF of participants believe they're adequately supporting their employees, but most only offer policy-driven benefits rather than tangible or financial supports.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Visit ProjectGrowth.WI.gov or contact wipdg@wisconsin.gov to learn more about Project Growth's latest initiatives and our community-based approach to improving child care in Wisconsin.

