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Quality Care for Children (QCC)-Professional Family Child Care Alliance of Georgia (PFCCAG)

FAMILY CHILD CARE: MEETING THE NEED FOR NON-TRADITIONAL HOURS (NTH) CHILD CARE IN GEORGIA

RESULTS OF A SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

CHANGE IN WORKFORCE HOURS

There is a growing number of American families working NTH. Non-Traditional Hours (aka Non-Standard Hours) is defined as "Hours worked outside the traditional Monday through Friday workweek, including schedules that vary from week to week." *Child Care Aware* (1). On the national level, several researchers document the extent and impact a shift to a 24/7 economy has on the workforce. For example:

- Forty-three percent (43%) of all children in the US have at least one parent who works NTH (*Child Care Aware* 2019) (2)

- Twenty percent (20%) of Americans work NTH, but 30% of families earning low incomes do (*Urban Institute*) (3)

- Forty percent (40%) of NTH workers earn less than 75% of all workers in the US (*Urban Institute*) (4)

- Single parent low-income households with little advance notice of work hours include Hispanic 49%, White 36%, and Black 34% (K. Mugglestone) (5)

- Last-minute call in or call off, "employers are shifting the lost hours risk to employees" (Karen Schulman, *National Women's Law Center*) (6)

- Irregular work schedules include second, third, rotating & double shift, compressed workweek, shift splits, and overtime work

- NTH workers have few leave benefits (sick leave, paid time off) and multiple part-time jobs

-Specific industries & occupations are increasing non-traditional hour work requirements, but the effect varies by location

IMPACT ON CHILD CARE PROGRAMS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FAMILY CHILD CARE LEARNING HOMES (FCCLCs)

Licensed Care

Licensed child care programs face challenges meeting the need for NTH care. Nationally only 8% of Centers offer NTH care (evening 2%, overnight 6%, weekend 3%) while 34% of Licensed Family Child Care Providers offer NTH care (*National Survey of Early Care and Education (HHS OPRE Report 2015-44)*).

There is less information about NTH care in Georgia, but it tends to support the national data. For example, in Georgia, 10.9% of FCC homes and 2.8% of centers offer care on weekends, 20.6% of FCC homes and 7.7% of centers offer care in the evening, FCCLH homes in GA are 3 times more likely to offer evening care than centers." (*Economic Impact of the Early Care and Education Industry in Georgia, GSU/UGA, 2016*)

Family Friends and Neighbors Care (FFN)

There is another type of child care arrangement that does not require a license. This form of care is often referred to as Family Friends and Neighbor Care (FFN) and will be discussed later in this publication.

QCC-PFCCAG NTH Partnership

QCC-PFCCAG believes it is important to understand the growing need for NTH care in Georgia and find ways to meet the need in a manner compatible with concerns of working parents, children in care, care providers, employers, and communities. Toward that end, they formed an NTH care partnership with the initial goals of:

1. *Identify the extent and characteristics of NTH work in GA and implications for child care during these hours.*
2. *Identify the role FCCLHs can play in meeting this need.*
3. *Identify the role employers and economic development organizations can play to meet the need for NTH child care.*
4. *Develop training for providers on marketing their NTH services.*
5. *Develop training for providers on creating a high-quality NTH care arrangement.*
6. *Develop support for parents seeking and using NTH care.*

QCC-PFCCAG were aware of efforts taking place in other states to survey child care providers and/or parents about the need for NTH care, and the pros and cons involved in offering that care (Child Care Aware (National), National Women's Law Center (National), Research for Action (Pennsylvania), (7) California Child Care Resource and Referral Network (California) (8)).

FCCLH Survey

QCC-PFCCAG decided to begin their partnership by surveying FCCLH homes. The intent was to start with the form of licensed care most open to meeting NTH care requests. The survey would dig into the demand for NTH care, providers' responses to requests for NTH care, reasons for offering or not offering NTH care, and other details which could be used to create a better match between parents seeking NTH care and FCCLH providers open to meet NTH care requests. QCC and PFCCAG adapted, with permission, a survey of caregivers (center, family child care, FFN) developed by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Adaptations reduced the number of questions and added questions of specific interest to QCC-PFCCAG. The result was a survey where some questions called for additional narrative responses. For purposes of this report, we treated each question and additional response question separately, so a total of 16 questions are addressed.

The survey was conducted November 3-19, 2019. It was sent by e-mail to 1,362 Georgia FCCLH homes providers on the QCC list. Three hundred thirty-four (334) providers completed the survey for a 25% response rate.

The following section includes each question, states response by percent and number, and offers QCC-PFCCAG comments and implications.

SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION 1. Most family child care homes offering full-time care are open from about 7:30 am – 6:30 pm on weekdays. Have you ever been asked to provide care earlier than 7:30 am, later than 6:30 pm, on weekdays, or on weekends?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Yes	91.4%%	305
No	8.6%	29

QUESTION 2. Have you ever provided care before 7:30 am, after 6:30 pm, on weekdays, or on weekends?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Yes	89.52%%	299
No	10.48%	35

Comment. Three hundred thirty-four providers responded to both questions. By an overwhelming majority, providers were both asked to provide NTH care (Question 1) and agreed to do so (Question 2). This information is qualified by a more detailed answer (Question 4), but it shows Georgia parents seek NTH care.

Question 3. If no, please describe why you don't provide care outside of these times (7:30 am – 6:30 pm).

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Do not have the staffing capacity	18%	6

Do not have demand for care in non-traditional hours	24%	8
Need to spend more time outside of work (e.g., with family)	42.4%	14
Licensing regulations or requirements make it difficult	15.5%	5

Comment. Thirty-three (33) providers responded to this question. Twenty-nine (29) providers said they were never asked and, of the providers who were asked, an additional 6 said they chose not to provide NTH care. Providers who were not asked or were asked and decided not to offer NTH care were given the opportunity to state reasons for not offering NTH care. While this number is small, some key themes emerge. Providers (6) who said they do not have staffing may be saying NTH care requires a longer working day or workweek, and they cannot envision adding extra hours unless they can find and add a part-time assistant. QCC-PFCCAG is not sure whether the difficulty of finding an assistant is the barrier but assumes that is the case. Providers (14) needing "to spend more time outside of work (e.g., with family)" reflect a legitimate concern that should be respected. This and other concerns/conflicts are discussed in greater detail in Question 9. Providers with concerns about licensing requirements (5) are discussed in Question 8.

QUESTION 4. Which of these non-traditional hours did you care for children? (Select all that apply)

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Earlier than 7:30 am	92%	271
Later than 6:30 pm	53%	154
Overnight	29%	86
Weekends	34%	101

Comment. Two-hundred ninety-three (293) providers responded to this question. Georgia FCCLH providers have a foothold in the NTH care business, which could potentially be expanded. The most popular hours for NTH care are before 7:30 am (92%) and after 6:30 pm (53%). At the same time, the percent of providers offering NTH care overnight (29%) and weekends (34%) is substantial. These latter two categories may reflect a broader commitment to the NTH care side of a provider's business. That is, if a provider opens earlier than 7:30 am but closes around 6:30 pm, she has committed to a longer day, whereas opening on weekends usually means a commitment to a longer workweek, and a commitment to offering overnight care may mean a commitment to two shifts of care. The survey did not ask if any provider serves exclusively families on 2nd shift or 3rd shift, so more analysis may be needed to verify these assumptions.

QUESTION 5. Were you paid to care for children during this time?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Yes	68%	200
Sometimes	20%	59
No	12%	34

Comment. Two-hundred ninety-three (293) providers responded to this question. While the majority (68%) of the NTH care arrangements were paid care, the number of providers saying "Sometimes" (20%) and "No" (12%) is also significant. Family child care has a well-deserved

reputation for being flexible in terms of charging parents facing difficult circumstances or meeting requests for longer hours of care. Given that most providers began offering NTH because "a family or families I was already serving needed it" (Question 7), there may have been circumstances where the provider chose to charge only "sometimes" or "not at all." QCC-PFCCAG does not wish to change the formula or percent of families receiving reduced fees for NTH care but wants to ensure providers are adequately paid for offering this form of care. Toward that end, we will continue to look at income and expense issues, including reasons why providers do not always charge for NTH care.

QUESTION 6. When you do provide non-traditional hour care, do you ever use a family member or paid assistant to help you?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Always	8%	23
Sometimes	27%	78
Never	66%	192

Comment. Two-hundred ninety-three (293) providers responded to this question. The number (192) and percent (68%) of providers who never use a family member or paid assistant when offering NTH care is surprising and not what QCC-PFCCAG anticipated. It could mean the provider only cares for a few children or for a few hours and considers the income "extra" revenue for her labor. Or it may mean the provider is unable to find an employee willing to work less than full time or at the inconvenient times associated with NTH care, so the provider absorbs the extra hours rather than to turn down a parent. Under either circumstance, it means the provider is committed to long hours caring for children.

The fact that family members were included in the question and the answer produced such a large "never" response requires further investigation. Based on federal law and Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) licensing requirements, anyone living in the home must complete a comprehensive background check, a key criterion for serving as a provider's assistant. Traditionally many providers have a family member available who might be able to help, so it is unclear why they are not being used.

NOTE: The survey did not include small Child Care Learning Centers (CCLCs), a category in Georgia equivalent to what, in other states, are called "Large Family Child Care Homes" or "Family Child Care Group Homes." This category usually includes a provider and one or more assistants and serves between 7-12 or more children. Small CCLCs often include family members as employees.

QUESTION 7. What was the main reason you decided to care for children during non-traditional hours?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Helping out a friend, family member, or neighbor	18%	53
Trying to increase enrollment and income for my family child care business	11%	32
A family or families I was already serving needed it	46%	135
I knew there was a need for it in my community	18%	53

Other	7%	20
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Comment. Two-hundred ninety-three (293) providers responded to this question. Money /increased income is not the main reason for providing NTH care. Having a family/families who need the care and are already in their program was the main reason for providing NTH care (46%), followed by helping out a friend/family/neighbor (18%) and knowing there is a need in the community for this type of care (18%). As we move forward, it will help to know whether providers who offered NTH care to an already enrolled family then decided to promote this service to other families or whether they continue to limit their availability to enrolled families.

QUESTION 8. Did license regulations or requirements make it more difficult for you to provide care during non-traditional hours?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
I don't know if I'm aware of any regulations or requirements	25%	73
No	71%	209
Yes (Please Explain)	4%	11

Comment. Two-hundred ninety-three (293) providers responded to this question. In Question 8, most providers (71%) said licensing regulations or requirements **did not** make it difficult to provide NTH care. This is positive since QCC-PFCCAG understood informally that licensing regulations may be a concern.

In Question 3, five (5) providers and in Question 8, eleven (11) providers indicated license regulations or requirements **did** make it difficult to provide NTH care. For each question, providers were offered an opportunity to explain. The responses were compiled, but no clear pattern emerged. There was a question about confining pets if the home was open for longer hours and one about the likelihood of increased visitors in the home during longer hours (e.g., weekends), which should be studied. Provider responses will be shared with DECAL. Identifying information about the provider submitting a response will remain confidential and not shared.

At the same time, QCC-PFCCAG recognizes issues may arise in several areas. There is a potential problem if arrivals and departures overlap, thus exceeding enrollment limits (Cf. 290-2-3. (03)(g) and 2). There are questions of how to exercise watchful supervision of children during evening hours (Cf. 290-2-3-07(7)). Other issues are programmatic in nature. For example, with children in evening or overnight arrangements, what are the characteristics of pick-up (e.g., should you waken a sleeping child, should you keep the child longer so a parent can get some sleep), and the child's experience (homework, use of TV and other media, bedtime routines).

QUESTION 9. What are the main challenges you faced in caring for children during non-traditional hours? Please read all the options and then pick up to three challenges.

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Low Pay	31%	52
Interfered with my personal time	45%	77
Interfered with my family time	42%	72
Interfered with prep time for the next day	16%	27

Interfered with my sleep	23%	39
Unpredictable schedule	32%	54
Other (Please specify)	7%	12

Comment. One hundred seventy (170) providers answered this question, and they could choose up to three reasons.

Four responses recognize the personal stress or difficulty NTH care presents for the provider, and all had significant response rates, e.g., interfered with my personal time, (45%); interfered with my family time, (42%); interfered with my sleep, (23%) and interfered with prep time for the next day, (16%). QCC-PFCCAG acknowledges these are barriers to expanding NTH care through FCCLH homes. QCC-PFCCAG will address these concerns in two ways. First, by acknowledging these concerns to other providers considering offering NTH care. Second, now that QCC-PFCCAG knows about the concerns, efforts will be made to identify strategies to reduce or eliminate the concern and incorporate the information in future communication and trainings.

Thirty-one percent (31%) or (52) providers indicated low pay was a primary challenge. QCC-PFCCAG will follow this question further. For example, should the Child and Parents Services (CAPS) rate for NTH care be raised? How do providers set the price for NTH care? Would NTH employers be willing to offer a cost incentive to serve their employees?

VARIABLE SCHEDULE QUESTIONS

QUESTION 10. Have you ever been asked by parents to provide care on a variable schedule (the child's schedule changes from week to week)?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Yes	58.3%	189
No	41.7%	135

QUESTION 11. Have you ever provided care for children with a variable schedule? (i.e., the child's schedule changed from week to week)

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Yes	54.3%	176
No	45.7%	148

Comment. Three hundred twenty-four providers responded to both Questions 10 and 11. The percent of providers asked, Question 10 (58.3%), and provided care Question 11 (54.3%), for children with variable schedules is less than those in Question 1 & 2 related to other forms of NTH care requests. This may suggest the demand for variable schedule care is lower but still needed. Or it may be just the beginning of a dialogue about the nature of variable schedules and the degree they can be met in a family child care setting.

Irregular work schedules, including second, third, rotating, double shift, compressed workweek, shift splits, and overtime work, are situational and individual in nature. Providers must judge whether they can handle the variability and possible inconsistency of the request, whether it fits into their personal and family situation, and what to charge. QCC-PFCCAG will continue to explore these issues. Responses to Questions 12-15 illustrate other dimensions of a request for care during irregular work schedules.

QUESTION 12. How much notice would you usually get between the family giving you the schedule and you providing care?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
No notice to a few days	31.8%	54
A few days to a week	37.6%	64
One to two weeks	21.8%	37
More than two weeks	4.1%	7
N/A	4.7%	8

Comment. One hundred seventy (170) providers responded to this question. Requests for irregular schedule care on short notice are high. About (32%) of requests came with no notice to a few days, and (38.6%) came with a few days to a week's notice. This may correlate to the question 7 response that many providers began offering NTH care because "a family or families I was already serving needed it." That is, the family being served had short notice of a schedule change and, in turn, had to make a request to the provider on short notice. The problem may be with the employer and not the employee, but the burden for flexibility and a quick response reverts to the family child care provider. QCC-PFCCAG will again pursue two strategies, 1) informing providers what to expect and 2) working with parents and employers to increase predictability in schedules and care requests.

QUESTION 13. Did licensing regulations or requirements make it more difficult for you to provide variable hour care?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
I don't know that I am aware of any regulations or requirements	24.12%	41
No	70.59%	120
Yes, please explain below	5.29%	9

Comment. One hundred seventy (170) providers responded to this question. See comment re Question 8.

QUESTION 14. If no, please describe why you don't provide care for children with a variable schedule (the child's schedule changes from week to week)

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
Do not have staffing capacity	9.46%	14
Do not have demand for variable schedule care	63.51%	94
Need to spend more time outside of work (e.g., with family)	16.89%	25
Licensing regulations or requirements make it difficult. Please explain below	10.14%	15

Comment. One hundred forty-eight providers responded to this question. Consistent with the lower request rate identified in Question 10, the most important reason why providers do not provide care for variable schedules is they do not have a demand for this type of care (63.51%).

NON TRADITIONAL CARE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

QUESTION 15. Almost one-third of college students are also parents. Would you consider providing evening or variable hour care to a paying college student parent?

ANSWER	Percent	Number of Providers
No -- I would not consider it	32.26%	100
Not sure -- I might consider it	24.52%	76
Yes -But for a limited number of evenings each week	18.71%	58
Yes- But for a limited number of children	9.68%	30
Yes -- As much as needed	14.84%	46

Comment. Three hundred ten (310) providers responded to this question. The number of providers (100), (32.26%), saying they would not consider providing evening or variable hour care to a paying college student parent appears to be high.

PROVIDERS SEEKING MORE INFORMATION

QUESTION 16. If interested in learning more about non-traditional hours or variable schedule care, enter your contact information below.

Comment. QCC-PFCCAG intends to remain in touch with providers who completed the survey and are interested in learning more and/or expanding to meet NTH care needs. Ninety-nine (99) providers supplied contact information in response to this question. One hundred twelve (112) providers supplied contact information in response to a comparable question about serving college students.

NEXT STEPS

Although delayed during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, QCC-PFCCAG has begun sharing results with FCCLH providers and other interested parties (DECAL staff, child care advocates, GA employers). This awareness campaign should lead to greater interest and ideas for addressing NTH care needs. While maintaining a focus on FCCLH as a primary service delivery option, QCC-PFCCAG will also pursue information/ perspectives which ensure all dimensions of the issue are understood and respected. To that end, QCC-PFCCAG will also look at:

Further research concerning challenges and successful practices. In light of the need for NTH care and in light of the challenges of providing this care, QCC-PFCCAG will continue to seek examples of successful NTH care practices and share them with providers.

Georgia NTH Workforce Data and Employer Support. QCC-PFCCAG will seek Georgia-specific data about NTH workers comparable to the data available nationally for purposes of comparison and to identify any Georgia-specific issues. This effort will also focus on identifying employers and communities willing to partner in pilot efforts meeting the need for NTH care.

Parent Information. QCC-PFCCAG will seek out parents who work NTH hours to obtain demographics, work hours and scheduling, current child care arrangements, and concerns about cost, availability, and quality of NTH care.

Impact on Children. There is also a possibility that children whose parents work non-traditional hours may experience poor developmental outcomes. QCC-PFCCAG will follow this question closely.

Family Friends and Neighbor Care (FFN). There is significant data showing most parents rely on FFN care to solve their NTH care needs. For example, the National Survey of Early Care and Education uses the term "Unlisted" to describe a home-based care arrangement not required to be licensed (e.g., unpaid, serving close relatives, fewer than 3 children, all categories not required to be licensed in some states). The report states that 82% of Unlisted Unpaid Providers offer NTH care and 63% of Unlisted Paid Providers offer NTH care. This contrasts with data for licensed centers and FCCLH homes stated in the introduction above (i.e., 8% of centers and 34% of providers offer NTH care.). There is also Georgia-specific data that confirms this trend. A 2019 report by the Committee for Economic Development indicates that while there were only 1472 FCCLH homes at the time of the report, 20, 758 Georgians reported home-based business income from caring for children. This latter statistic suggests several avenues to pursue: if parents see FFN care as their best option to meet really complex NTH requests, what can be done to promote this option, how safe and supportive to children is FFN care and can the child care professional community help make it better, is any of this care intentionally illegal and what can be done about it, and should we recruit FFN caregivers to become licensed FCCLH homes?

FOOTNOTES

(1) Dionne Dobbins, Ph.D., Karen Lange, Catherine Gardey, Jen Bump, MA and Jacob Stewart. *IT'S ABOUT TIME! Parents Who Work Nonstandard Hours Face Child Care Challenges*, Child Care Aware 2019

(2) *IT'S ABOUT TIME*

(3) Julia R. Henly, Gina Adams, *Insights on Access to Quality Child Care for Families with Non-traditional Work Schedules*, Urban Institute, October 2018

(4) Ibid.

(5) Mugglestone, K.). *Finding time: Millennial parents, poverty, and rising costs*. (2015 Retrieved from <https://younginvincibles.org/report-finding-time-millennial-parents-poverty-rising-costs/>

(6) Schulman, K, *Family Child Care During Non-traditional Hours: Challenges and Strategies*, (Workshop at NAFCC Annual Conference, National Women's Law Center, June 2018

(7) Kelly Sloane PH.D., Jason Fontana, Anna Shaw Amoah, David Lapp, Alyn M Turner PH.D., *MAKING OT WORK Examining the Status of Non-traditional Child Care in Pennsylvania*, Research In Action, June 2019

(8) Gemma DiMatteo, *Non-traditional Hours and Child Care: An Exploratory Study of the Needs of Families and Child Care Providers in California*, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, October 2019