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DATA ANALYSIS REPORT
SUBSIDIZED LEGALLY EXEMPT CHILD CARE IN ALBANY COUNTY

Submitted to:
Office of Children and Family Services
Bureau of Early Childhood Services

Submitted by:
Center for Human Services Research
University at Albany

June 26, 2006

Data Analysis Report Subsidized Legally Exempt Child Care in Albany County

Introduction

The Center for Human Services Research (CHSR), as specified in the contract with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Bureau of Early Childhood Services, conducted an analysis of data maintained by the Albany County Department of Social Services (DSS) on subsidized legally-exempt child care providers¹ and the families who use this type of care. This information will inform the overall project, “Subsidized Legally Exempt Child Care in Albany County” in the following ways:

1. Provide an understanding of the current provider community and families who use this type of child care, including the number of providers in the County, the number of children in care, ages of children in care, and the average number of hours of care
2. Identify the most convenient locations to conduct focus groups for the next phase of this project, based on the concentration of both providers and parents
3. Determine what data are not collected currently and therefore should be collected during the telephone survey phase of the project
4. Inform the intervention design and implementation phase of the project

Data Files

The electronic data obtained from DSS represents all home-based legally exempt child care providers in Albany County who received a child care subsidy/payment in October 2005. This time period was chosen because it corresponds with the month OCFS approved the contract with CHSR and when DSS approved CHSR access to their confidential provider and parent data. Payments for October 2005 are for child care services provided prior to the month of October, including September 2005 or possibly any previous month due to issuance of late payments.

The data from the payment data base for October 2005 does not necessarily reflect the overall nature of services being provided throughout the rest of the year. However, this “snapshot” does provide some information that may be useful in understanding the legally exempt childcare service needs of Albany County.

¹ NYS OCFS defines legally exempt child care as:

Legally Exempt Family Child Care

- child care for one or two children provided outside the child's own home in a residence by a caregiver who is chosen and whose services are monitored by the child's caretaker; or
- child care for more than two children provided outside the child's own home in a residence by a caregiver who provides such care for less than three hours per day and who is chosen and whose services are monitored by the child's caretaker; or
- child care provided by a relative within the third degree of consanguinity of the parent(s) or step-parent(s) of the child.

and Legally Exempt In-Home child care

- child care furnished in the child's own home by a caregiver who is chosen and monitored by the child's parent/caretaker.

For purposes of this project, the legally exempt population **does not** include group legally exempt care defined as Pre-K, nursery school, programs for school-aged children, summer day camps, or day care centers operated on federal/tribal property.

CHSR met with DSS to discern what format the provider and parent data are stored in, how the data files can be shared, and what data are available electronically. Tables 1 and 2 list the original data requested from DSS compared with what data is stored and available electronically.

**Table 1
Provider Data**

| Data Variable Requested | Available | Comments |
|---|------------------|---|
| Number of children provider receives payment for during a month | Yes | |
| Provider name, address, phone number | Yes | |
| Relative or non-relative provider | Yes | |
| Where care is provided | Yes | |
| Gross annual income from DSS child care subsidies | No | System records first and last payment only |
| Number of hours per week providing DSS-subsidized child care | No | Part-time or full-time only. Specific hours in case file only |
| Days of the week that DSS-subsidized child care is provided. | No | Recorded in case file only |
| Amount of payment received per week from DSS and Parent | No | Payment case files only |
| Has caregiver been licensed in the past | No | |
| Special needs status of children in care | No | |
| Provider demographics – age, race, gender | No | |

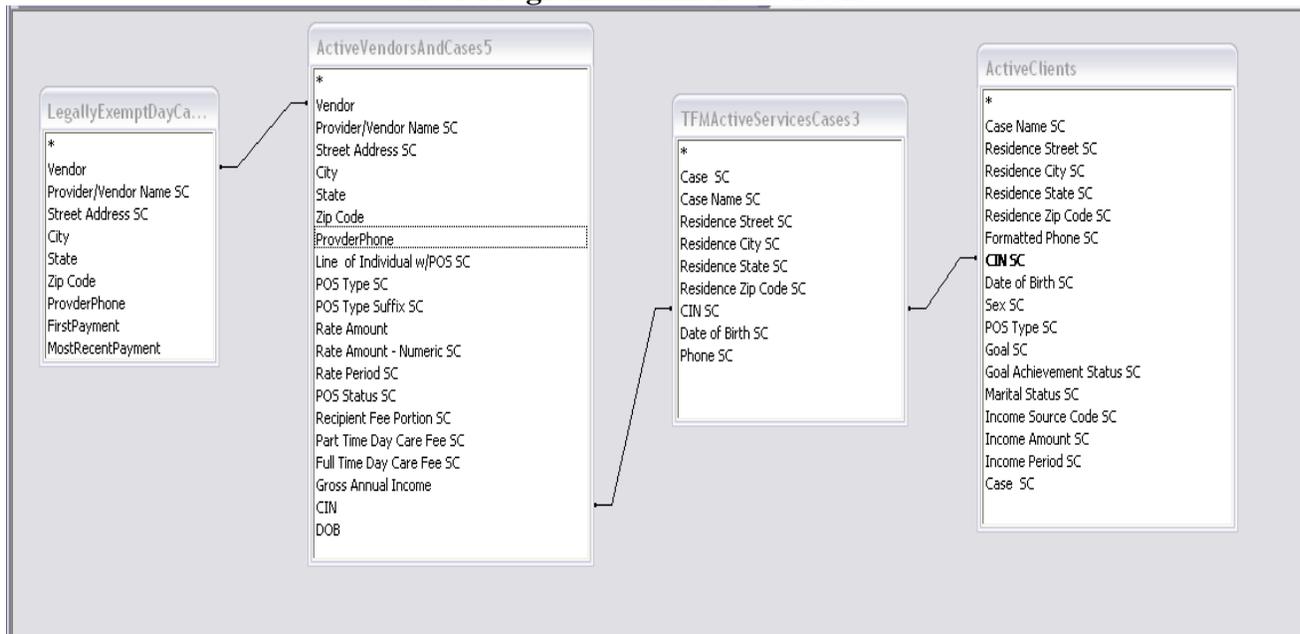
**Table 2
Parent/Guardian Data**

| Data Variable Request | Available | Comments |
|--|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Age | Yes | |
| Name, address and phone number | Yes | |
| Gender | Yes | |
| Number of children in care | Yes | |
| Age of each child in care | Yes | |
| Child's relationship to the provider | Yes | Relative or non-relative only |
| Marital status | Yes | |
| Reason for subsidized care | Yes | |
| Household income | Yes | Annual family income |
| Education level achieved | No | |
| Days and hours child care is utilized | No | Part-time or full-time care only |
| Sources of income | No | |
| Ethnicity of parent/guardian | No | |
| Employment status - full-time or part-time | No | |

Once we determined the available variables, DSS electronically transmitted four excel tables with the data. Since the tables were not linked, CHSR used the assigned CIN (Case Identification

Number) as the common identifier across the four tables (See Table 3). A master file was created linking all children in the database to their child care provider and to the family and parent data. CHSR staff then imported this master file into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to analyze data.

Table 3
Center Program to Link Data Tables



Data Cleaning

After the initial analysis, data errors were discovered that needed to be corrected to produce accurate reporting. The initial data report showed that 277 children in the DSS active case file did not have a provider attached as expected resulting in our “Missing Vendor” report.

DSS reported the following possible scenarios/reasons for children in the subsidized database without an assigned vendor:

1. Parent and child’s case is active, but no provider is assigned and no payment made in the month of October.
2. Parent and child’s case is active, but parent not working in that month and did not qualify for or need child care.
3. Family could be between providers.
4. Improper paperwork submitted, therefore no payment issued for the month of October.
5. Children no longer receiving subsidized child care due to aging out of system – 13 and older and with no special needs.
6. Provider information missing – name and or assigned vendor number - due to data entry error.
7. Children no longer receiving legally exempt child care; enrolled in other types of subsidized child care – generally center based care.

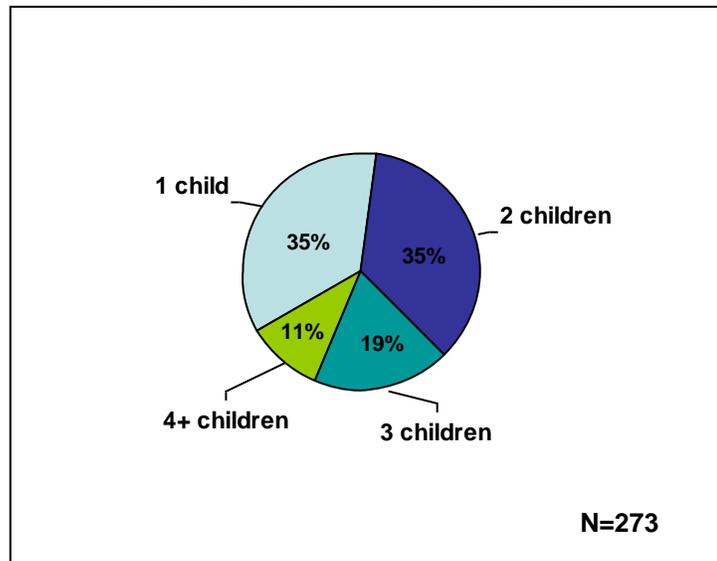
In order to determine the specific reason for the missing provider information and to ensure accurate numbers, a manual case file review was conducted. For each child's CIN number, DSS printed out the billing information for the same time period of the original data pull. The hardcopy print-out for each child was reviewed to determine the reason for no provider information and to determine if the child should be included or deleted from the sample. Children were deleted from the sample most frequently due to aging out of the system or to switching child care types (e.g., from a legally exempt provider to a day care center). In a few cases the missing data were discovered, the children remained in the sample, and staff entered the provider name and corresponding vendor number into the original master file.

The following sections synthesize the Albany County data and describe the characteristics of legally exempt child care providers and the children in their care and the characteristics of families who use this type of child care in the month of October 2005. Please note that the term "Parent" used in the report refers to either biological parent or legal guardian of the children in care.

Characteristics of Providers and the Children in their Care

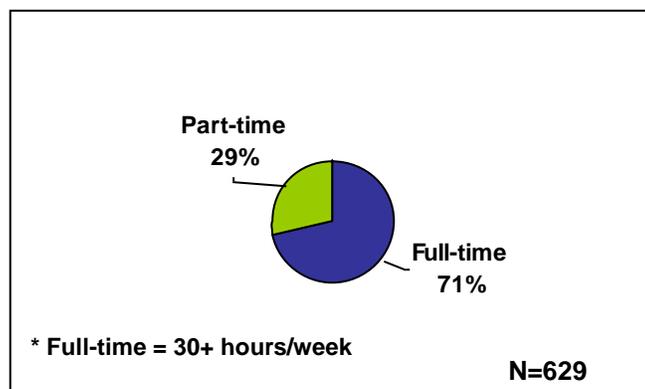
There were a total of 273 providers in the sample. The vast majority of the providers (85%) live in the city of Albany, and the rest in the remaining areas of Albany County. The number of children in their care, a total of 629 in this sample, ranged from one to six². Thirty-five percent of providers care for 1 child, 35% care for 2 children, 19% care for 3 children and 11% care for 4 or more children. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1
Number of Children in Provider's Care



As displayed in Figure 2, the number of hours children are in the provider's care varied among the children in the sample by full-time (30 or more hours per week) and part-time (less than 30 hours per week). The majority of children (71%) were in childcare full-time rather than part-time.

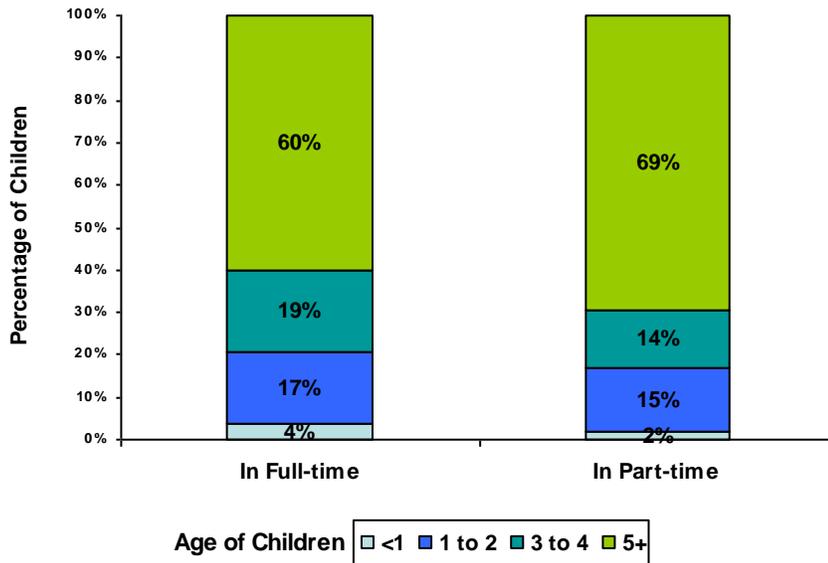
Figure 2
Hours in Child Care



² The number of children in a provider's care does not necessarily indicate the children are cared for at the same time, but represents the total number of different children the provider was paid to care for in October 2005.

While we hypothesized that younger children would be in care more often than school-aged children, Figure 3 shows that there were no major age differences between the proportions of children in full-time care with children in part-time care.

Figure 3
Age of Children by Hours in Care
Full-Time vs. Part-Time



We also examined the number of hours children are in care by their relationship to the provider - relative vs. non-relative. The number of hours children are in care, full-time vs. part-time, did not vary by the child's relationship to the provider. Seventy-one percent of children in relative care are cared for full-time and 71% of children in non-relative care are cared for full-time.

Regarding the breakdown of the relationship of the child to their provider, 68% of the children were related to their provider, while the remaining 32% were not related. (See Figure 4). Close to half of the children (48%) were cared for by a relative full-time.

Figure 4
Relationship of Children to Provider

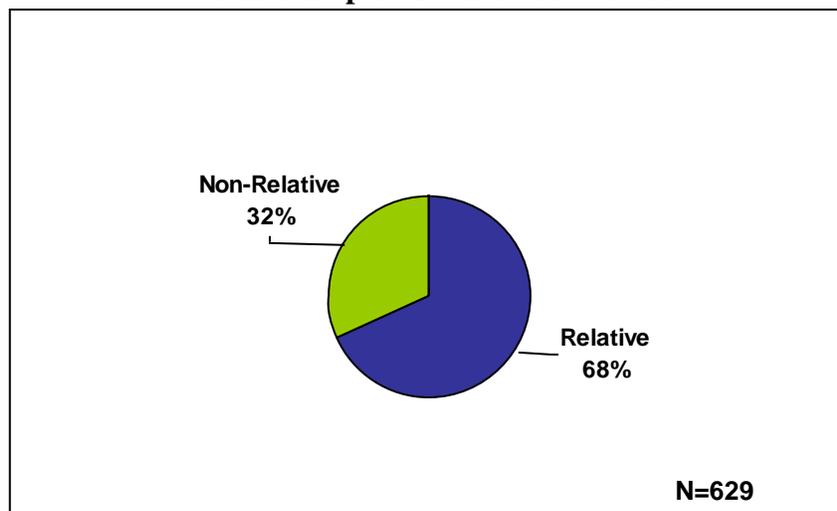
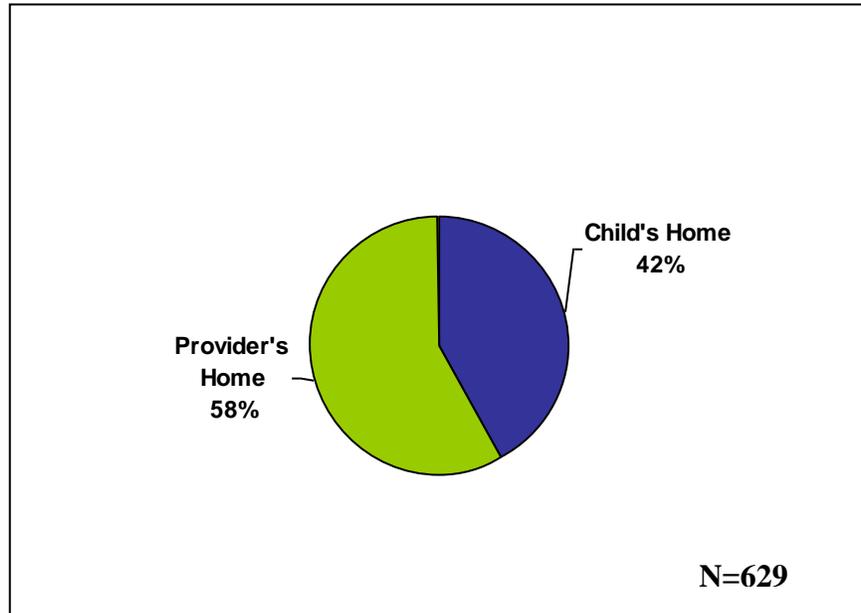


Figure 5 shows the majority of children (58%) are cared for in the provider's home.

Figure 5
Location of Child Care



We also examined if the setting for the child care varied by relative vs. non-relative (See Figures 6 and 7). The majority of children who are related to their provider are cared for in the provider's home (62%), while an equal number of children who are not related to the provider are cared for in their own home and the provider's home. Therefore, care is offered in the provider's home more often when the child is related to the provider (62%) than when the child is not related to the provider (50%).

Figure 6
Setting of Care for Relatives

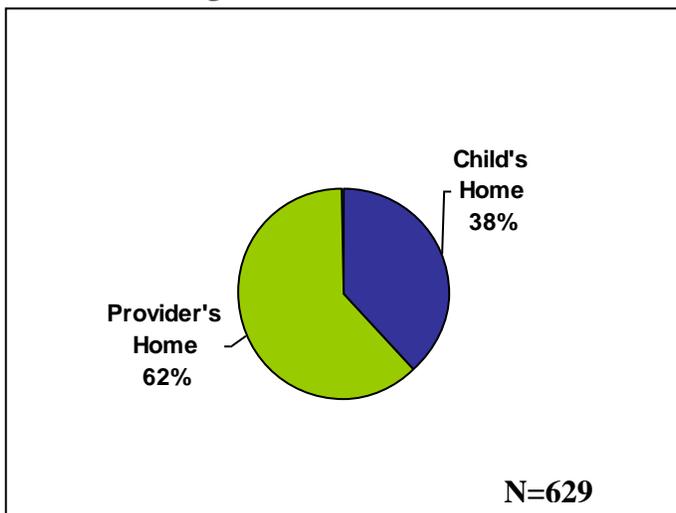
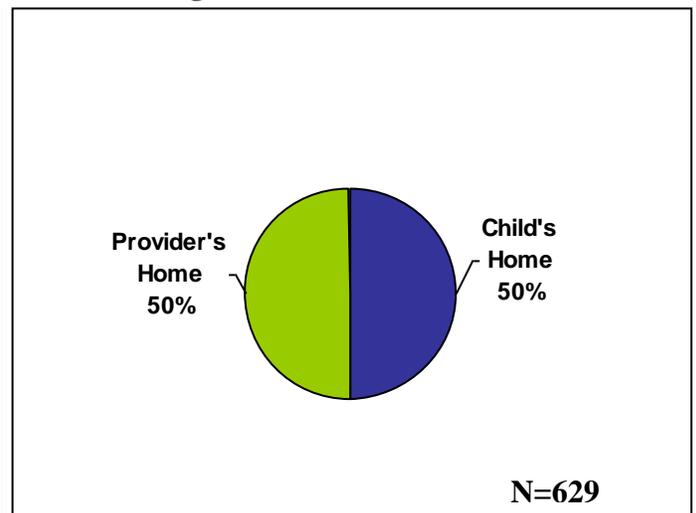
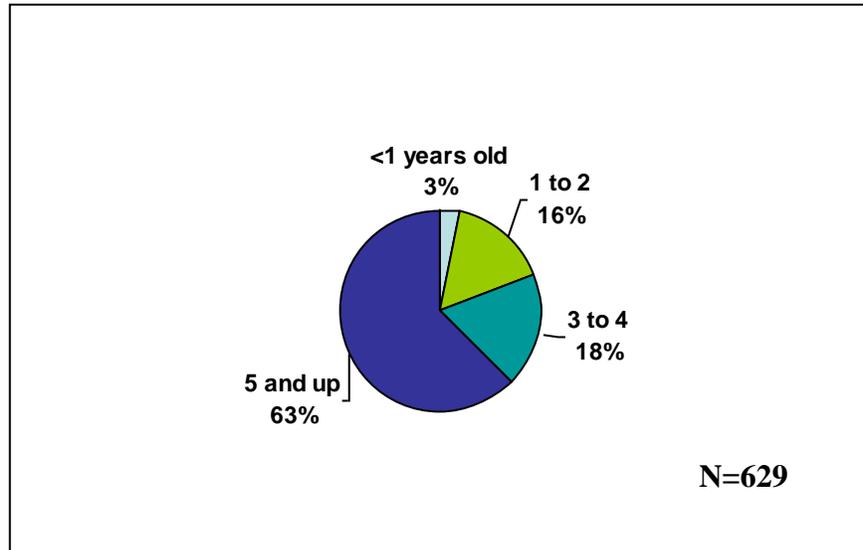


Figure 7
Setting of Care for Non-Relatives



Of the 629 children in the sample, there was an even split between genders. Figure 8 shows a detailed breakdown of the children by age. The majority of children (63%) were 5 years of age or older, 18% were 3 to 4 years old, 16% were 1 to 2 years old, and 3% were less than 1 year old.

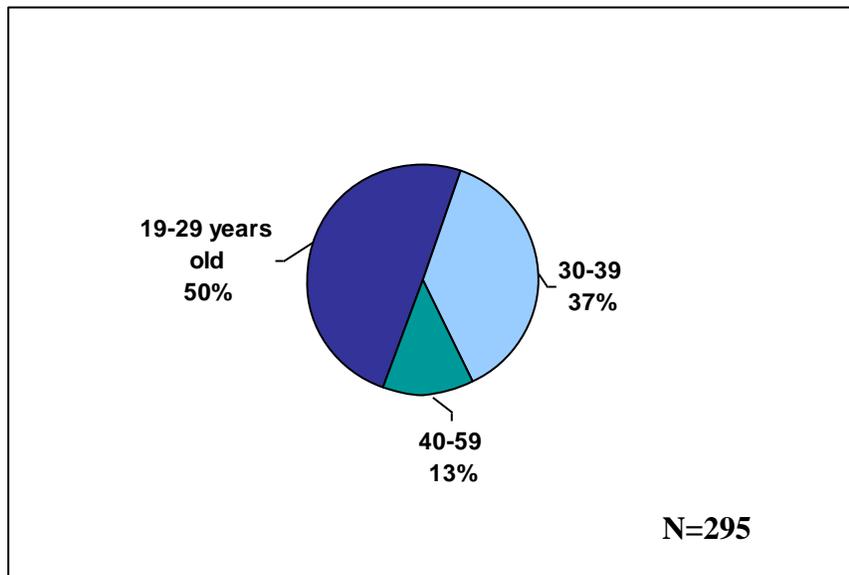
Figure 8
Age of Children in Legally Exempt Care



Characteristics of Parents Utilizing Legally Exempt Child Care

Information was collected on 295 parents. The vast majority of parents (97%) were females. Nearly 85% of the families live in the city of Albany, and the rest in the remaining areas of Albany County. Figure 9 describes the age breakdown of parents. Half (51%) of the parents were between 19 and 29 years of age. The next largest proportion (37%) was between 30 and 39 and 13% were age 40 and older.

Figure 9
Parent's Age



A substantial majority of parents (97%) were unmarried as displayed in Figure 10.

Figure 10
Parent's Marital Status

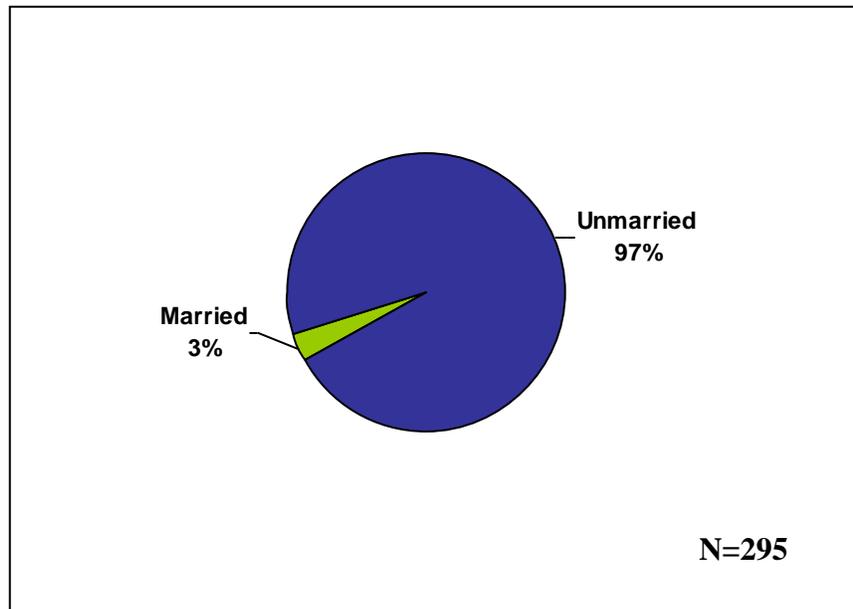
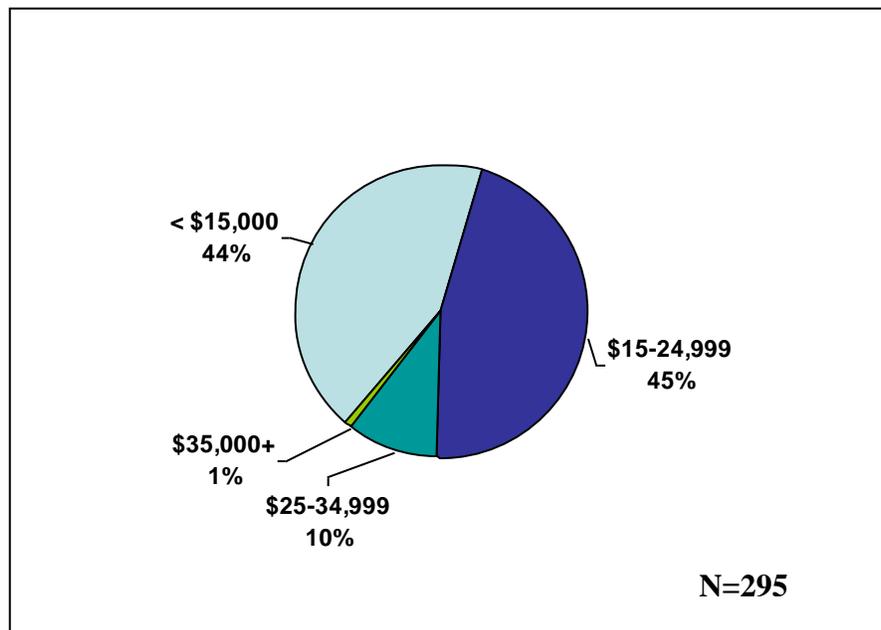


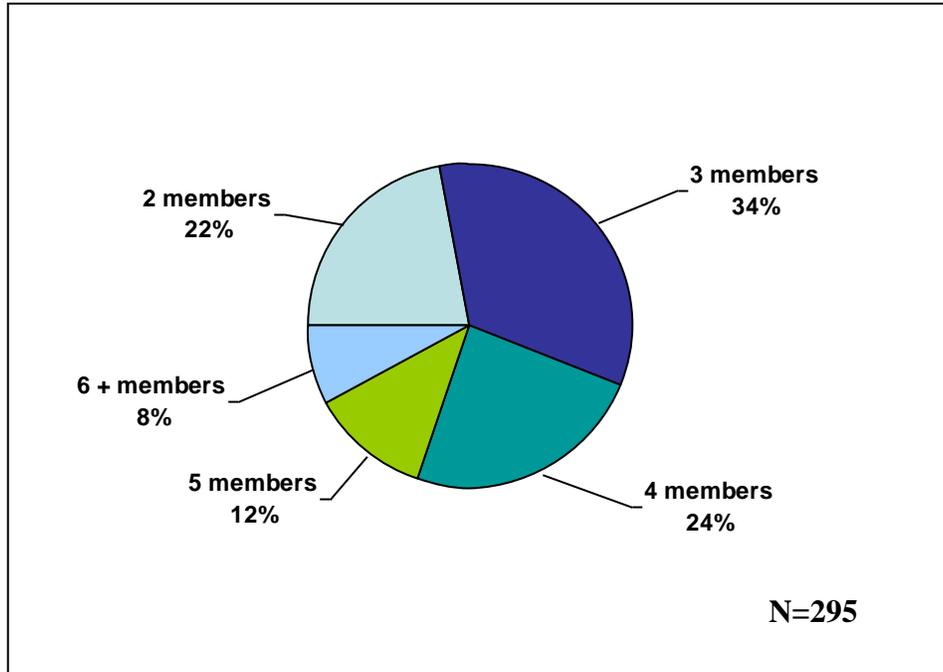
Figure 11 shows the average income for these parents, reported as total household income, was \$16,100. Income figures include earned income and all other types of financial support, such as child support. The vast majority (89%) of households earned less than \$25,000.

Figure 11
Household Income



Household size for these same parents ranged from two family members to eight family members. Figure 12 shows that most households reported three family members (34%) with four family members reflecting the next highest percentage (24%).

Figure 12
Household Size



As displayed in Figure 13, in October 2005, 94 % of families receiving a child care subsidy for legally exempt providers were employed and 6% were seeking employment, involved in training and education, or couldn't work due to illness. For the employed families, 32% transitioned off of Public Assistance based on TANF income regulations.

Figure 13
Parent's Reason for Needing Child Care Subsidy

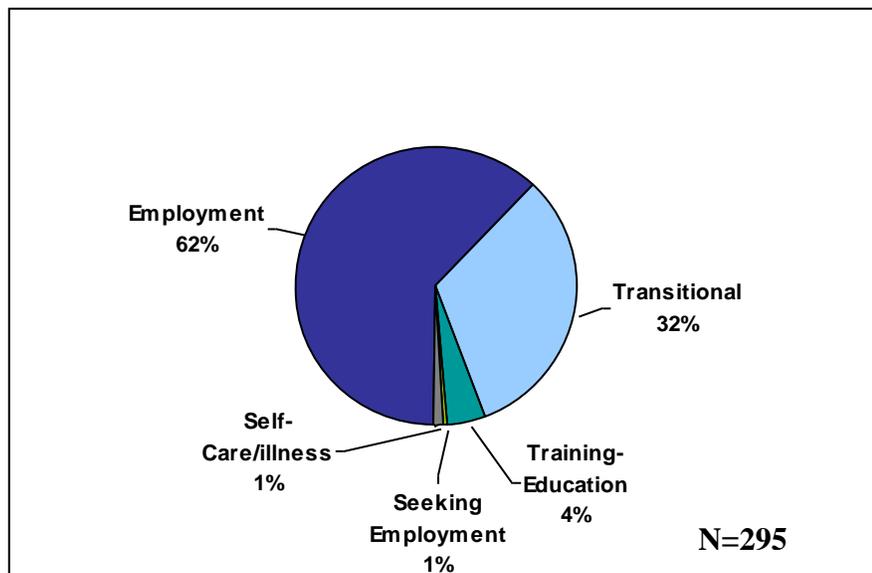
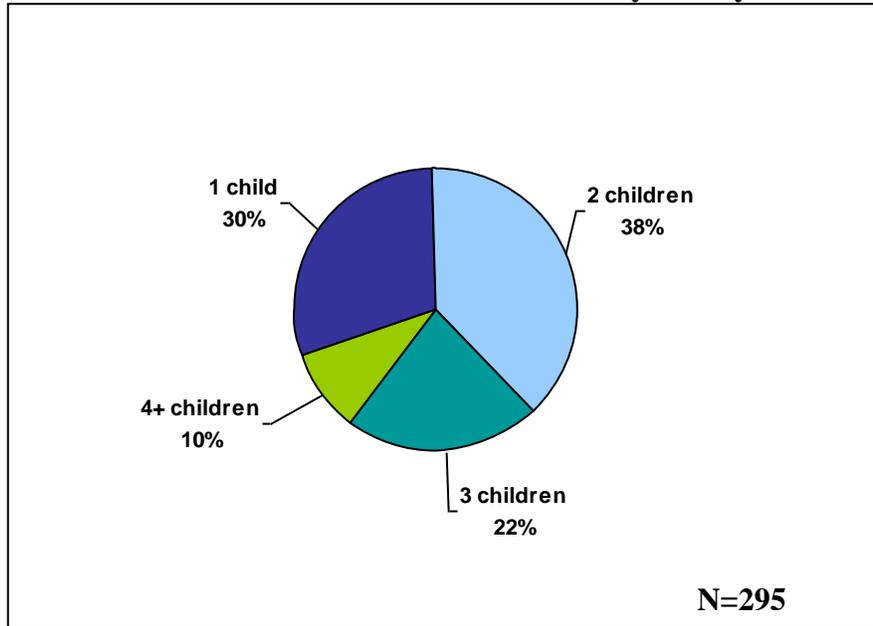


Figure 14 shows the number of children per family in subsidized legally exempt childcare varied from one child to six children. About 30% of the families in the sample had one child in care, 38% had two, 22% had three, and 10% had four or more children in care.

Figure 14
Number of Children in Services by Family



Summary and Conclusions

The data analysis provides us with a good understanding of the characteristics of Albany County legally exempt child care providers and the families they serve. Most children in legally exempt child care in Albany County are related to their providers (68%) and these same families live close by to their providers (85% of children in care live in the City of Albany and 85% of providers live in the City of Albany). Almost three-quarters of the provider community care for 2 or fewer children (70%) and provide full-time care (71% of children are in full-time care). The majority of children in their care are school-aged children (63%) while only 3% are infants, under 1, and 34% are toddlers, between 2 and 4 years of age.

The data allowed us to select the most convenient areas of the county to conduct focus groups. Based on the geographic location of both providers and parents, focus groups were held in the City of Albany. The three largest concentrations of city zip codes, (not displayed in this summary report), were 12202, 12206, and 12210 for both parents and providers. Based on this data, focus group sites were organized in the 12202 (Giffen Elementary School), 12206 (Unitarian Church) and 12210 (St. Patrick's Church) zip code areas. These sites were easily accessible to both providers and parents.³

³A report on the focus group findings is being prepared and will be presented to OCFS with the results of the telephone survey findings.

The data also had implications for the telephone survey: Data that were “missing” or unavailable in the electronic files will be collected through the phone surveys. For example, we will ask providers the following: age, educational background, working a second job, prior child care training, years of child care experience, specific relationship to the child, average hours per week providing care, etc. For the parent survey, we will ask about their satisfaction with the care their children receive from providers and their expectations of providers when caring for their children.

Finally, and most importantly, the data will inform the design of the provider intervention, the final stage of this project. The data analysis demonstrates that most providers are relatives and are caring for school aged children. These two considerations may impact the type of intervention recommended. For example, an intervention, if child focused, may target achieving success in school and provide school supplies and tips for helping kids with homework rather than providing a workshop on caring for infants (3% of children in care) or gross and motor skill activities with young children. The location for program delivery, if on-site, may be in the 12202, 12206 or 12212 zip codes given the high concentration of providers in these areas. Some providers may be available during the day given the majority are caring for school aged children. However, meetings probably should not be scheduled on school holidays or during the summer, likely the busiest time for these same providers. Finally, the data will allow us to contact and track the child care providers.