

Comparison of Key Findings in 1999 and 2009 Boulder County Child Care Needs Assessments

In the past 10 years, two early care and education needs assessments have been conducted in Boulder County. The fact that the primary means of data collection were similar in both studies provides an opportunity to compare key findings in these two “snapshots” 10 years apart.

Data Collection

- Both surveys were conducted using telephone interviews of a randomly selected sample of Boulder County families with children (Table 1).
- The main difference is that the 2009 survey included families with children aged five or younger, while the 1999 survey included families with children under 13 years of age.

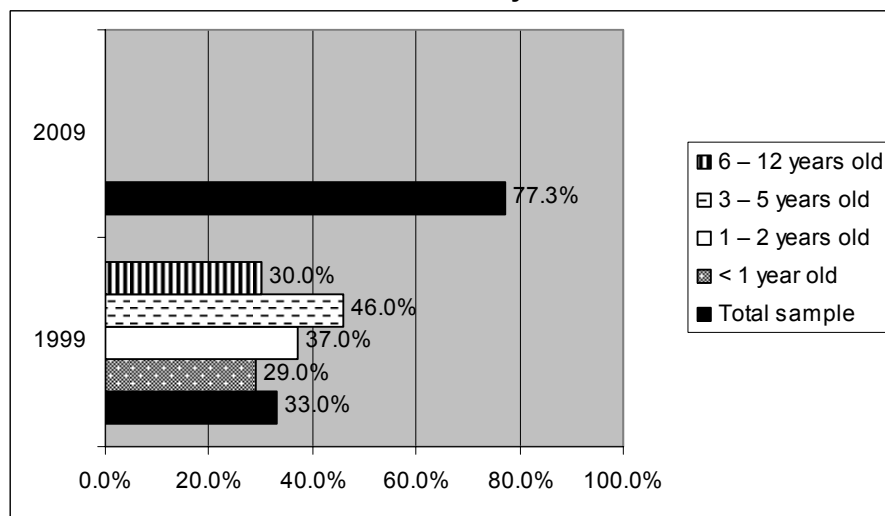
Table 1. Data collection characteristics of 1999 and 2009 Boulder County early care and education needs assessments

| | 1999 | 2009 |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Data collection method | Telephone interviews (random digit dial) | Telephone interviews (targeted call list) |
| Age group of child(ren) | < 13 years old | ≤ 5 years old |
| Sample size | 625 | 400 |

Percent of Families with Children in Care

- Families were more likely to have a child in care in 2009 than in 1999. More than three-quarters of families in 2009 compared to one-third in 1999 had at least one child in care (Figure 1).
- In 1999, families with children aged 3 to 5 were most likely to have a child in care, 46%, which was substantially lower than the overall 2009 rate.

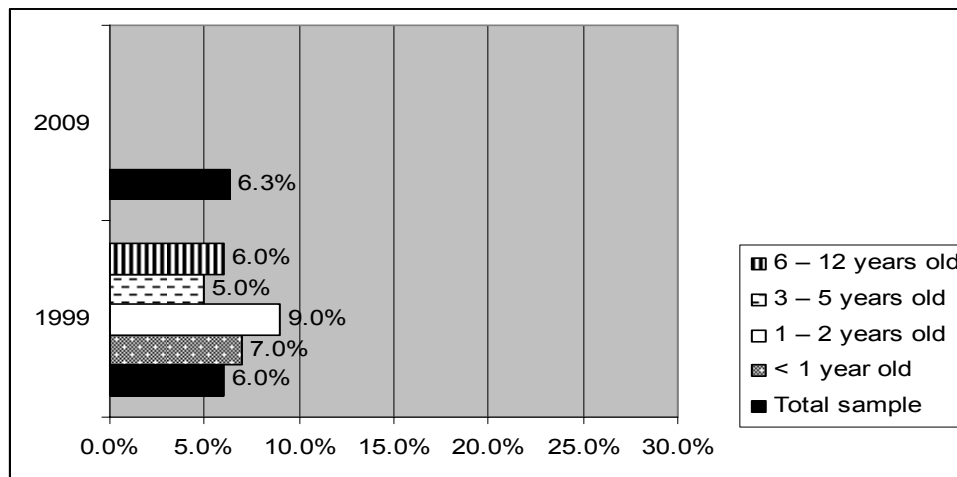
Figure 1. Percent of Boulder County families with children with at least 1 child currently in child care



Percent of Families Not Currently Using Care But in Need of Care

- About 6% of families with children in both surveys were not currently using care but indicated a current need for care (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percent of Boulder County families not using child care but with current need for child care



Primary Reason for Using Child Care

- Work as the primary reason for using child care declined dramatically between 1999 and 2009, from 85% to 46% (Table 2).
- Child's socialization and child's education were each indicated as primary reasons by one-quarter of families with children in care in 2009 but by only a small percent of families in 1999.

Table 2. Primary reason for using child care among Boulder County families with at least 1 child currently in child care

| | 1999* | 2009 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Work | 85% | 46.0% |
| Child's socialization | 7% | 24.9% |
| Child's education | 5% | 26.5% |
| Other | 7% | 2.6% |

* Only families with a child in care aged 0-5. Responses summed to more than 100% because more than one reason could be given.

Problems Finding Child Care

- In general, families were more likely to report having significant problems in finding care in 1999 than in 2009 (Table 3).
- However, in both years, finding affordable care was the most frequently mentioned problem, by 44% of families in 1999 and 31.1% in 2009.
- Quality of care was among the second most frequently mentioned problems in both years.

Table 3. Problems finding child care among Boulder County families with at least 1 child currently in child care

| | 1999: "Big problem" | 2009: "Major or moderate problem" |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Affordable care | 44% | 31.1% |
| Quality care | 39% | 21.0% |
| Finding any care | 28% | 8.4% |
| Conveniently located care | 21% | 16.2% |
| Available days/times needed | 18% | 21.0% |
| Well-trained providers | 39% | N/A |
| Provider/situation feels comfortable | N/A | 21.7% |

Child Care Arrangements

- Child care arrangements differed substantially in 1999 and 2009.
- Preschool was the most common arrangement in 2009, used by 56.0% of families (Table 4). In 1999, it was used by 23.5% of families with a child in care aged five or younger.
- In contrast, care in someone else's home (a child care home, friend, or neighbor) was the most common type of care in 1999, by 31.1% of families. This arrangement was used by only 12.9% of families in 2009.

Table 4. Child care arrangements used by Boulder County families

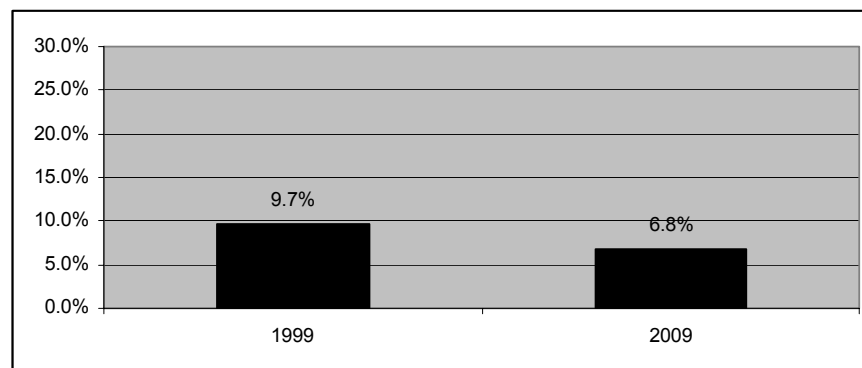
| | 1999* | 2009 |
|---|-------|-------|
| Preschool | 23.5% | 56.0% |
| Child care center | 24.4% | 25.2% |
| Child's home, by non-relative | 14.3% | 13.6% |
| Someone else's home (child care home, friend, neighbor) | 31.1% | 12.9% |
| Child's home, by relative | 0% | 8.4% |
| Relative's home | 5.9% | 5.8% |
| Other | 7.6% | 10.7% |

* Only families with a child in care aged 0-5.

Financial Assistance for Child Care

- About the same percent of families with children in care aged five or younger received financial assistance for child care in 2009 as in 1999, 6.8% and 9.7%, respectively (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percent of Boulder County families with at least 1 child currently in child care receiving financial assistance for child care



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