



Examining Working Pregnant Women's Needs for Child Care in Nebraska

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2018 CYFS Summit on Research in Early Childhood, Lincoln, Nebraska

BACKGROUND

Little is known about the **actual and perceived needs, resources, and barriers** that **working women experience** in identifying **quality child care for infants in rural mid-west communities**.

A study examining the **issue of limited or lack of child care supply** across eight states revealed that 65% of child care centers did not provide care to infants (age 0-1) and that **rural communities were disproportionately impacted** (Malik et al., 2016).

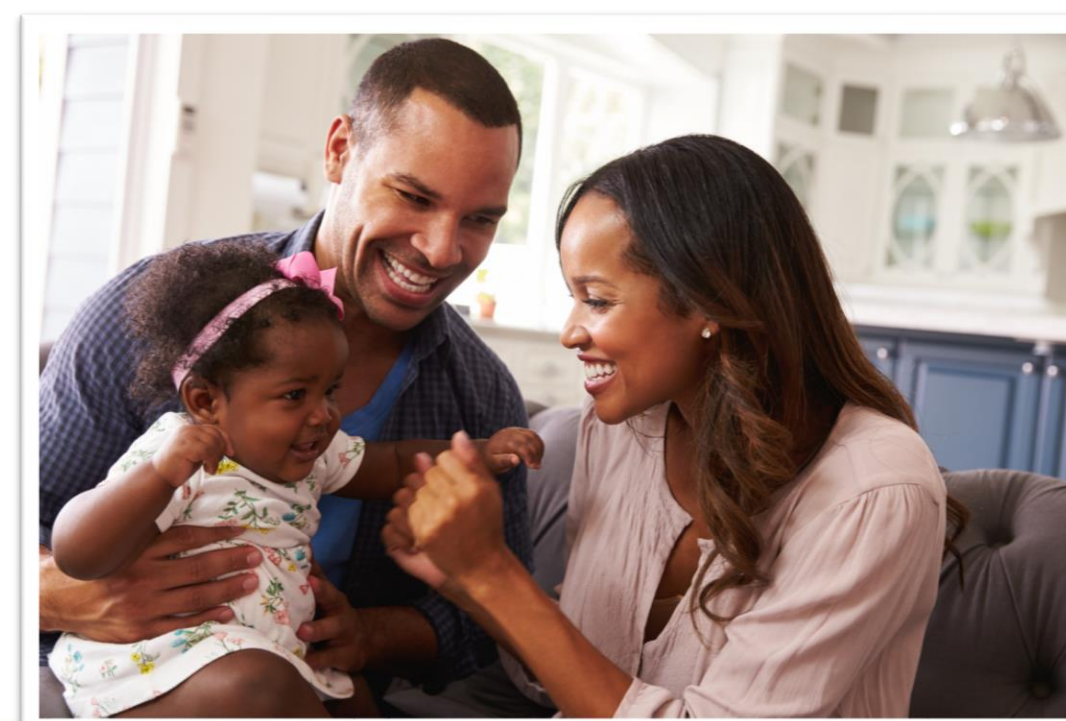
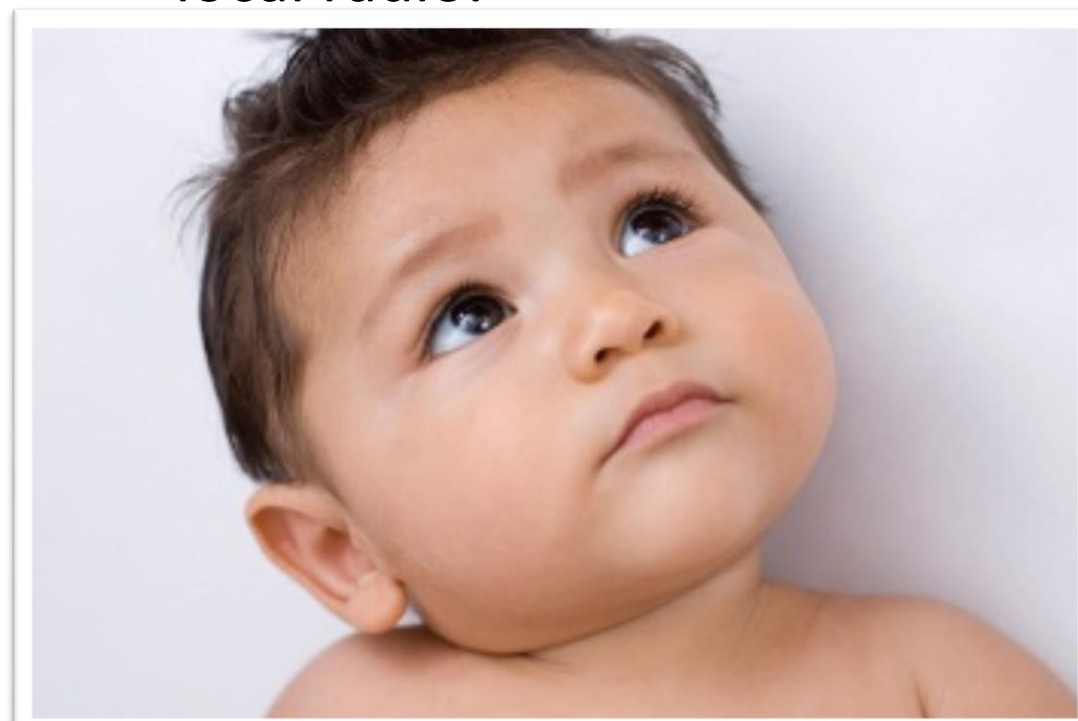
Factors such as a shortage of available and/or affordable services, parental knowledge about early childhood development, and work-life conflicts (e.g., time) make it difficult for a family to access quality affordable child care.

Research Questions: What decisions do working pregnant mothers make about child care for their infant? How do mothers describe the availability and accessibility of child care in their community?

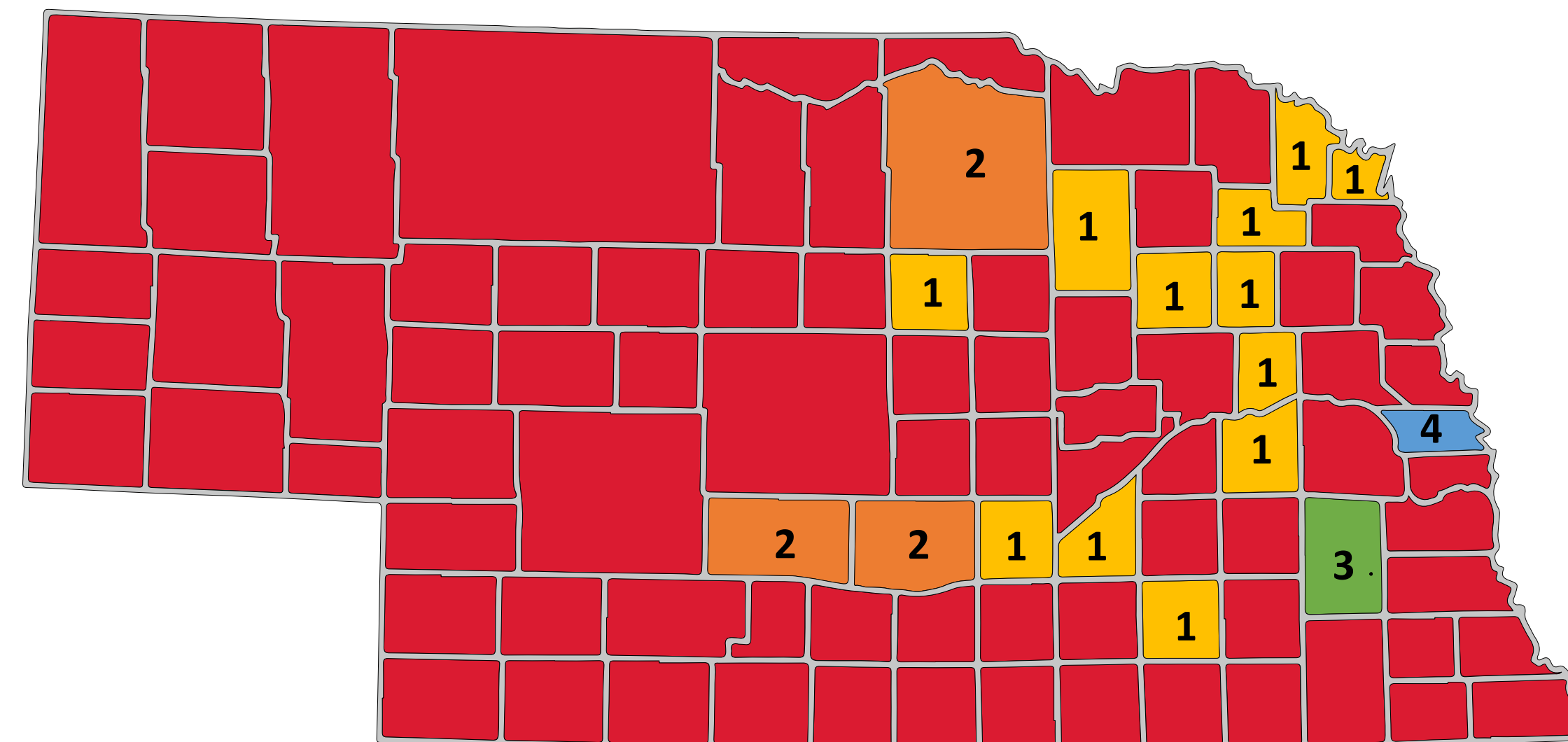
METHODS

Research Design: Exploratory research study using a **mixed methods convergent design**

- Collect both qualitative (interviews, observations) and quantitative (surveys) data
- Aiming to collect information from 45 **working mothers living in rural mid-west communities** by visiting their homes at three different times and by visiting child care providers two different times.
- Participants will receive \$30 for participation at the first two time points and \$40 at the last time point (\$100 in total).
- Recruitment – worked with Extension Educators who are part of The Learning Child Extension Interest group to share flyers with potential participants via Twitter, online learning communities, Facebook, and local radio.



Current Participants Living in 17 Counties throughout Nebraska



1 Participant: Antelope, Butler, Colfax, Dakota, Dixon, Fillmore, Garfield, Hall, Hamilton, Madison, Stanton, Wayne

2 Participants: Buffalo, Dawson & Holt
3 Participants: Lancaster
4 Participants: Douglas

Data Collection Timeline



PARTICIPANTS

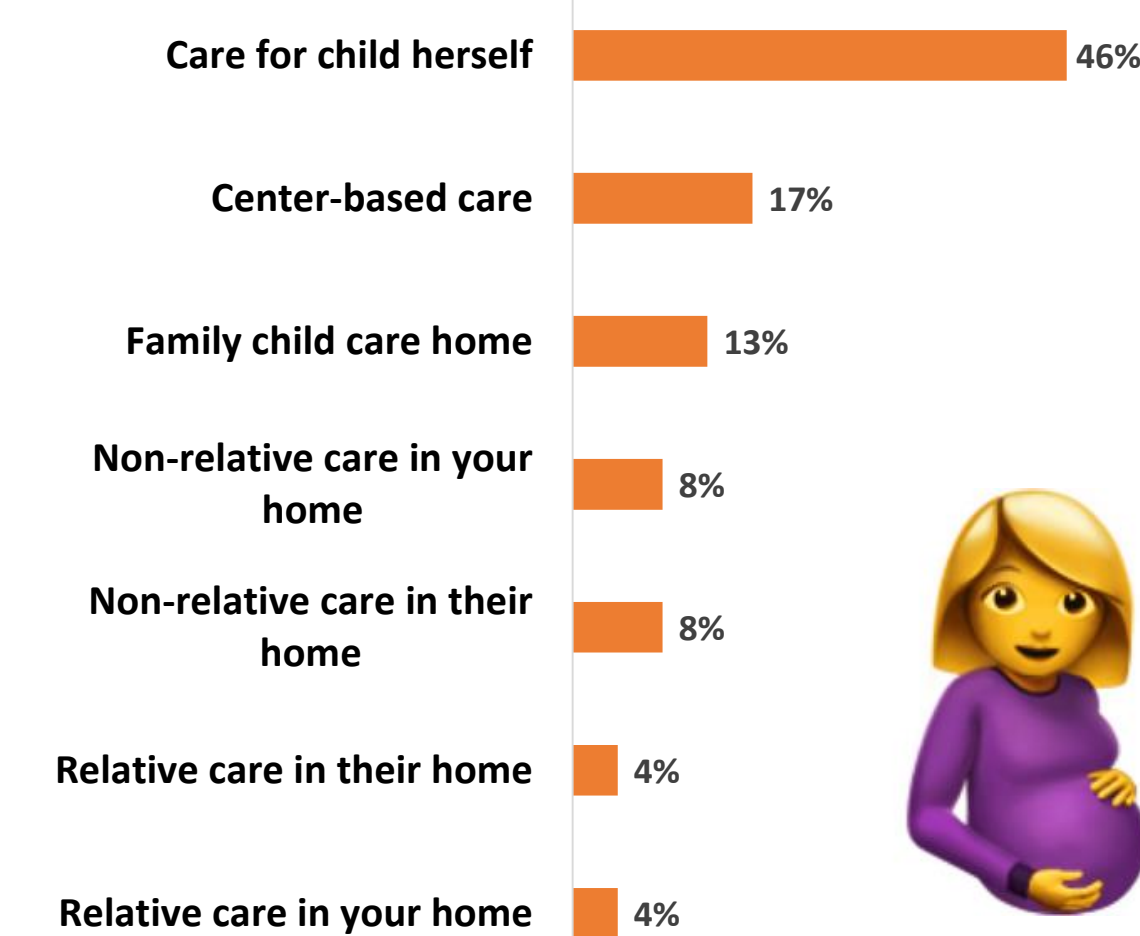
25 working, pregnant mothers have participated to date. All participants are employed full-time. Twenty-three (92%) participants indicated they are married or in a domestic partnership, and 64% (n=16) currently have other children.

Demographic Characteristics		n	%
Hispanic/Latino	Yes	1	4
	No	24	96
Race	White	24	96
	No Response	1	4
Household Income	\$35,000-49,999	1	4
	\$50,000-74,999	10	40
	\$75,000-99,999	7	28
	\$100,000-149,999	5	20
	\$150,000-199,999	2	8
Percent Income Spent on Child Care	0-15%	18	81
	16-30%	3	13
	31% +	1	6
Highest Level of Education Completed	Associate Degree	2	8
	Bachelor Degree	9	36
	Graduate Degree	12	48
	Other	2	8

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Availability of Child Care

What kind of childcare would a working mother choose for her infant if she had complete freedom to choose? (n=24)



24/25 mothers had child care arrangements in place, but discussed accessibility and availability as a concern in their communities.

"One of my friends...started making calls when she was about two months pregnant. Everybody was saying, 'You really should have told us a couple of months earlier than this', which would have been before she was pregnant."

"In the town we are living...there really aren't any child care centers." "... we're in the town... it's so little. There are only like three daycares in the whole town."

"Optimally I would be a stay at home mom. Daycare is very limited in this town. Right away I had contacted my first choice of provider and it happened that she was not going to be able to have anymore in her daycare... She will be cared for by a registered nurse so that seals that deal even more for me. It gives me a peace of mind."



- Parental Leave – **Flexibility for work & taking care of infants** – almost half of the **mothers would prefer to care for their infant**, but talk about needing the income and/or enjoying their jobs.
- Some mothers talked about the struggle with the availability of child care in their local communities, especially for infants.
- In discussing qualities they desired in a child care arrangement, safety was mentioned as the most desired child care quality, followed by trust with the caregiver and their infant receiving sensitive, responsive care.
- Need more perspectives from diverse and underrepresented populations throughout the state.**
- Will examine how our findings are similar or different to a parallel study being conducted in Brazil.

References available upon request.