



CAS 2012 Research Brief #3

Program Participation and Policy Perceptions among Child Care Center Directors in Chicago West and North Side ZIP Codes

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Introduction

The 2012 Chicago Area Study surveyed 229 center directors in 33 ZIP Codes on the West and North sides of Chicago. All centers and preschools that served three and four year olds in these ZIP Codes were eligible, except those located in the public schools. Eligible settings included preschools in churches, private schools, and community organizations as well as preschool programs and full-day care in standalone child care centers. Fully 70% of eligible directors participated in the study. For simplicity we refer to all participants as “centers.”

We prepared a set of initial research briefs to disseminate basic study findings. Each of these briefs describes a set of data collected in the survey for the sample as a whole and across five types of ZIP Codes. The five ZIP Code types allow us to provide a basic portrait of differences in center characteristics depending on the race-ethnicity and income of the community. The five types of ZIP Codes are: (1) mixed race, low income, (2) majority non-Hispanic Black, low income, (3) majority Hispanic, low income, (4) majority non-Hispanic White, middle income, and (5) majority non-Hispanic White, high income. The cutoffs between low/middle and between middle/high income are \$48,500 and \$70,000 respectively (about two and three times the federal poverty line for a family of four in 2011). We define a location as being a majority of one race-ethnicity if the ZIP Code is comprised of at least 50% of that racial/ethnic group (see CAS 2012 Research Brief #1 for additional details).

This CAS 2012 Research Brief #3 summarizes directors’ responses to questions about their participation in various programs, including Head Start, Preschool for All, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Child Care Assistance Program (C-CAP), and Quality Counts as well as questions about their perceptions of these programs.

Programs in Brief

Head Start: Federally funded program for low-income families, including preschool for 3- and 4- year olds.

Preschool for All: State-funded pre-kindergarten program for 3- to 5-year olds, targeting all children up to four times the federal poverty level but prioritizing children at-risk for academic failure.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): Federally funded program reimbursing child care centers for meals and snacks served to children, with reimbursement levels tied to family income (similar to the school lunch program).

Child Care Assistance Program (C-CAP): Subsidy offered to parents on a sliding scale (based on family size and income) covering a portion of the cost for child care.

Quality Counts: Rating system that encourages providers to improve quality (including by offering higher subsidies to higher-rated programs) and helps parents locate higher quality care.

The tables at the end of this document present means and proportions for the variables, and tables of supplementary information (including statistical tests) are available from the study investigators. Here we highlight some of the major results.

Individual Programs

We first discuss the results for each of the five programs individually. We use a similar bulleted structure in each section.

We begin by summarizing parallel questions asked about each program -- whether they participate; if not, why not; if so, the importance of the program to quality care and their experiences with delayed payments. We consider participation overall as well as within five ZIP code types. Because most programs target low-income children, we anticipate higher participation rates in lower-income areas. We anticipate this association should be especially evident for programs that require providers to apply to participate (Head Start, Preschool for All, CACFP) and less so for portable subsidies that parents could use at any center (C-CAP).

We then summarize unique questions asked just about some programs, such as whether the program should be available to all families or targeted at low-income families and whether the basic child care subsidy covers the rate charged to privately paying parents.

Head Start

- Overall, 27% of centers in the study participated in Head Start. Not surprisingly, participation was higher in low-income than high-income ZIP Codes. Participation was highest in majority Black, low-income ZIP Codes, where 63% of centers participated in Head Start.
- Among centers that did not participate, fully half in the highest income areas said this was because not enough families qualified; from about 10% to 30% of centers in the low and middle-income areas cited this reason.
- Among those who indicated sufficient qualifying families, the extent of paperwork was the most commonly selected reason for not participating (41% overall) followed by the degree of oversight (33%) and lack of qualified teachers (21%).
- Among participants in Head Start, most directors indicated that the program was very important to their delivery of quality care (87%) and few had experienced delayed payments (37% never; 46% sometimes), although those who had experienced delays cited them as having a very important effect on their financial stability (45%).

Preschool for All

- Nearly one-third of centers (31%) participated in Preschool for All. Participation was highest in low-income areas; nearly half of centers in mixed race, low-income and majority Black, low-income areas participated. In contrast, just 10% of centers participated in majority White, high-income areas.
- Overall, about one-third of non-participating centers said they did not participate because too few families qualified; nearly three-fifths of non-participating centers cited this reason in majority White, high-income areas.
- Among centers that reported enough families qualified, about one-quarter each cited difficulty hiring qualified teachers, problems with paperwork, and concerns about oversight as reasons for non-

participation. Difficulty finding qualified teachers was a particular concern of center directors in majority Black, low-income areas, where nearly half reported this barrier.

- Among participating centers, reports of the importance of Preschool for All to the delivery of quality care were near unanimous. Fully 86% overall said it was very important and an additional 11% reported it was somewhat important. Very important was selected by over 80% of center directors in every type of ZIP Code. Most directors reported delayed payments happened just sometimes (33%) or never (35%), although among those who reported delays, over two-fifths reported a substantial effect on financial stability.
- The majority of directors (74%) thought that state-funded pre-kindergarten should be available to all children, with the remainder thinking it should be available only for children at-risk of school failure. Directors in the majority White, middle- and high-income areas were more likely to prefer a program focused on at-risk children (35%-39%) than directors in low-income areas (13%-21%).

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- The majority of centers – 56% -- participated in the CACFP food subsidy program. Participation was nearly unanimous in majority Black, low-income centers (94%). In striking contrast, only 16% of centers in majority White, high-income areas participated.
- Among centers that did not participate, most directors cited the lack of sufficient families who qualified.
- Among those with sufficient qualifying families, about one-fifth to one-quarter cited the program's level of paperwork and oversight as barriers to participation.
- Over 90% of participants reported that the program was very important to their delivering quality care. Few reported payment delays; fully two-thirds said payments had never been delayed.

Child Care Assistance Program (C-CAP)

- Nearly two-thirds of centers (63%) had children enrolled who were funded by the Child Care Assistance Program (C-CAP). Participation rates ranged between two-thirds and three-quarters in the low and middle-income areas, and were above one-third even in the high-income areas.
- Among center directors with no children enrolled in C-CAP, the majority (52%) reported that families did not qualify.
- Among the small number who said families qualified but that they did not participate, one-sixth to one-fifth each reported the barriers of paperwork, oversight, and the level of the reimbursement rate.
- Most center directors reported that C-CAP was important to their being able to provide quality care (82% overall reported it was very important). The majority of directors who participated reported delays in payments either often (22%) or very often (31%) and most who experienced delays reported that they had a substantial impact of the center's financial stability (54%).
- Almost half of directors (45%) reported that the state reimbursement rate covered the rate that they charged to privately paying families. Directors in the majority White, highest income areas were least likely to say so (16%) followed by those in majority White, middle-income areas (33%) and mixed race lower income areas (43%). Most directors in low-income areas that were majority Hispanic or majority Black reported that the subsidy fully covered their fees (59% and 70% respectively).

- When the reimbursement rate fell below private fees, over two-fifths of directors reported they charged families the difference; this was particularly likely in higher income areas (56-57% in majority White, middle- and high-income areas; 14-42% in low-income areas).
- Most directors whose centers did not charge families the difference reported this forced them to limit spending on renovations, materials or staff (64% somewhat or very much) and to charge more to families who did not receive subsidies (46% somewhat or very much).
- Almost half of directors (46%) also reported that parents often or very often had been unable to pay in the last year, with most reporting that they worked out a payment plan with families when this occurred.
- When asked for their opinions about the universality of the subsidy program, directors were almost evenly divided between those who thought the program should be available to all families (46%) and those who thought it should be restricted to low-income families (51%), with the remainder feeling the state should provide no child care subsidies to families.
- As was the case for directors' preferences about state-funded preschool, directors in majority white, high-income ZIP Codes were most likely to support restricting subsidies to low-income families (60%).
- Directors also responded to questions regarding their perceptions of parents' views of the C-CAP subsidy program. Most directors (65%) thought some or a lot of parents might value the diversity that accepting subsidies could bring to a center, with the highest endorsement of this perspective coming from directors in mixed-race low-income areas (76% some or a lot).
- Many directors also thought that some or a lot of parents might prefer the steady funding source from the state that subsidies could bring, a perspective more likely among directors in low-income areas (62%-69%) than directors in middle- and high-income (54% and 37%, respectively).
- On the other hand, fully one-third of directors thought some or a lot of parents might worry that fees would increase for other children if a center began accepting subsidies, and this percentage was highest among directors in majority White, high-income areas (43%).
- Just over a quarter (26%) of directors also believed that some or a lot of parents would worry that the quality of care might decline if a center began accepting subsidies, a perspective again most often endorsed by directors of centers located in majority White, high-income areas (45%).

Quality Counts

- Just over one-quarter of center directors (28%) reported that they participated in the Quality Counts program. Over one-third of those who did not participate reported that families in their area did not use the ratings when choosing preschool.
- Among those who reported that families used the ratings in care choices, just over one-quarter of non-participants cited paperwork and oversight as barriers while 15% were worried about receiving a low score and 9% reported that they had not been licensed long enough to participate.
- Among participants, most said they signed up because they had been confident that they would score well (95%), because their center benefitted financially (89%), and because they had enough staff to complete the training (88%). Just a slight majority (57%) of participants reported signing up for the program because parents used it when selecting preschools.

- Most directors felt the Quality Counts program was important to their delivery of quality care (74%). At the time of the survey, participation in the Quality Counts program was voluntary, and just over one-third of directors thought it should be mandatory.

Multiple Program Participation

In recent years, policymakers, advocates, and researchers increasingly recognize the complexity of the policy and program landscape in child care. Better coordination among programs is encouraged, especially in an effort to offer children and families full-day, full-year care. Our data offer a unique window into multiple program participation. As an initial look at this topic we identified the most common combinations of programs in the data across the four central funding programs (C-CAP subsidies, CACFP food subsidies, Preschool for All, and Head Start) and looked to see how this multiple program participation varied across ZIP Code types.

In the data as a whole, four combinations of programs were most common, covering at least 10% of the sample each: (1) C-CAP subsidies only, (2) C-CAP subsidies combined with CACFP food subsidies, (3) C-CAP, CACFP plus Preschool for All, and (4) C-CAP, CACFP, Preschool for All, and Head Start. Figure 1 shows the distribution of center participation in these various combinations of programs by ZIP Code type. We showed the results as stacked bar charts, highlighting the different distributions in each ZIP Code area, with the height of each shaded area representing the fraction of centers participating in a given program combination.

At the top of each bar, the area shaded in dark black (with small dots) represents the proportion of centers participating in all four programs. The results show that 20% to 30% of centers in the three types of low-income ZIP Codes participated in all four programs, as did about 10% of centers in middle-income areas. No centers in the majority White high-income ZIP Codes did so. The dark solid bar directly below shows the proportion of centers participating in three of the four programs, all except Head Start. This configuration of programs was more common in the mixed race, low-income and majority White middle-income areas.

Comparing the next two bars – C-CAP subsidies combined with CACFP food subsidies and C-CAP subsidies alone – we see that C-CAP only is more common in the majority White areas and in the mixed race low-income areas and least common in the majority Black low-income area. Given the C-CAP participating children would qualify for full CACFP subsidies, this result is surprising. As noted above, we do find a substantial fraction of directors reporting paperwork and oversight as barriers to program participation, which may explain in part why they are “leaving on the table” these additional subsidy funds.

At the bottom of each bar, the white band represents centers participating in no programs, showing the strikingly higher levels in the majority White, high-income areas. The lack of white bar in the majority Black, low-income areas also indicates that all centers in these areas participated in at least one program. The bar directly above (with sideways lines) represents centers participating in other combinations. Within ZIP Codes this category is common for majority Black and majority Hispanic low-income areas, and these “other” combinations are primarily centers participating in Head Start and the CACFP food subsidy program.

Summary

This research brief provides a comprehensive portrait of the participation of centers in Chicago's North and West sides in publicly funded programs. The results demonstrate the importance of these programs to many centers, with the overwhelming majority of directors who participate reporting they are very important to the quality of care that they can offer. At the same time, delays in payments created financial stress. Figure 2 summarizes participation rates and payment delays. Participation was highest in the two broad subsidy programs for basic fees (Child Care Assistant Program) and meals and snacks (Child and Adult Care Food Program), with the majority of centers in Chicago's North and West sides participating in these programs. Delayed payments were much more common in the basic than the food subsidy program, however. Participation was about half as high, at closer to one-third of centers, in preschool programs funded by the federal and state government (Head Start and Preschool for All), with payment delays more common in the state than federal program.

The results also show important variation by the race-ethnicity and income levels of the local areas. Not surprisingly, participation in these publicly-funded programs was highest in the lowest income areas. All centers located in majority Black, low-income areas participated in at least one program, and over one-quarter participated in four programs (C-CAP, CACFP, Preschool for All, and Head Start). At the same time that these results suggest the programs are reaching many children in need, they also reveal that such centers are likely most vulnerable to cutbacks and payment delays associated with the state's financial crisis. The centers participating in multiple programs also face the complexity of understanding and fulfilling the requirements across the multiple programs. We also importantly found that almost half of the directors who did not participate in Preschool for All in majority Black, low-income areas said that they had difficulty finding qualified teachers. This result is important for continuing conversations both about policies that shore up the child care workforce as the state tries to fulfill a promise of "preschool for all"; and, about the potential that ratcheting up requirements in an effort to assure quality may push some experienced child care teachers out of preschool classrooms.

The vast majority of participating directors endorsed the importance of these publicly funded programs for supporting quality in their centers. Directors also generally expressed support for these programs. All directors thought that the state should fund preschool, with three-quarters thinking it should be universal and the remainder supporting targeted funding of at-risk children. Nearly all directors also supported public funding of child care subsidies, with almost half endorsing universal eligibility and the others preferring targeted funding for low-income families. Directors in majority white, high-income areas were most likely to endorse targeted funding of preschool for at-risk children and of subsidies for low-income families. We will pursue these results in greater depth in future reports and papers.

Figure 1. Center Participation in Multiple Programs

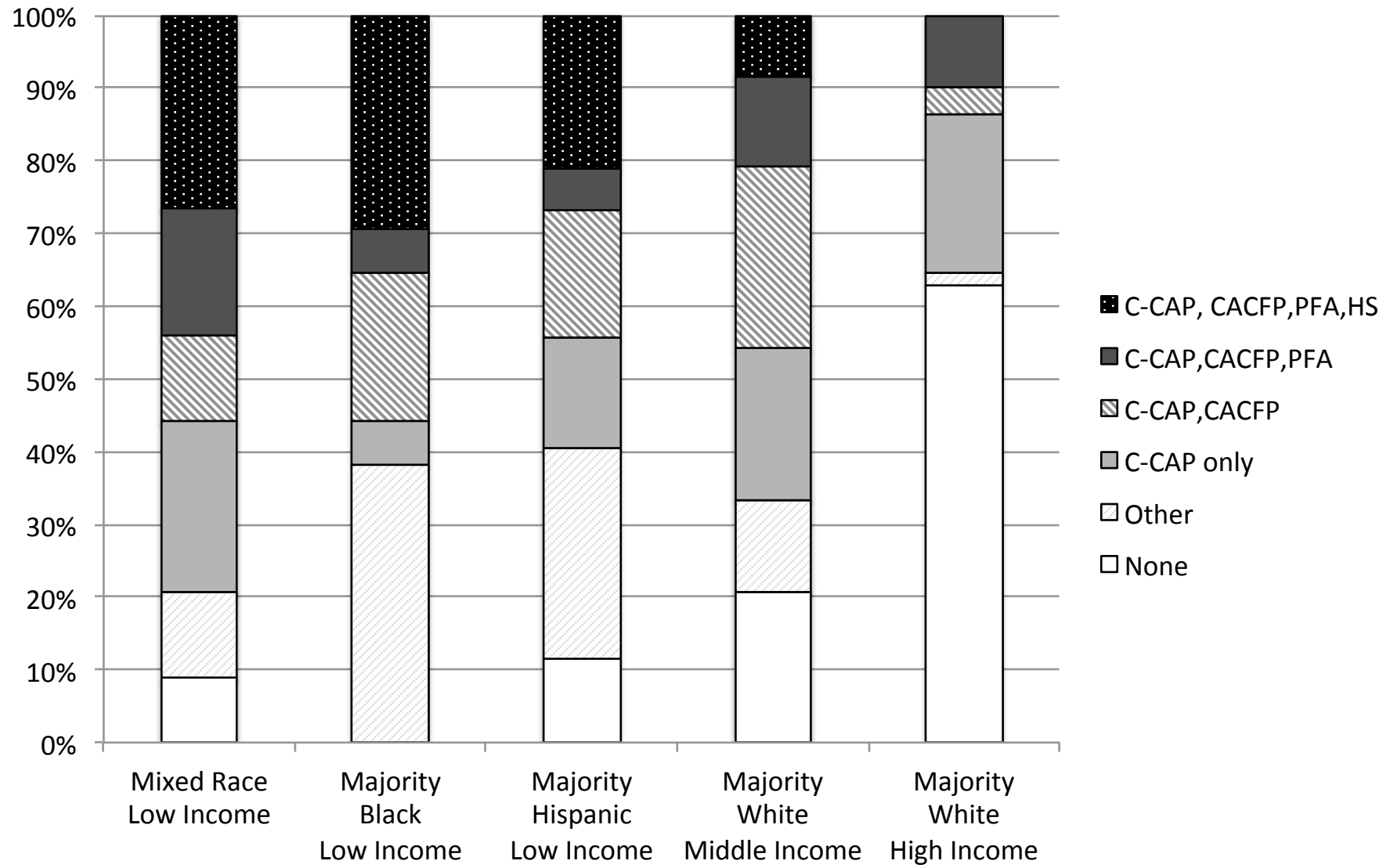


Figure 2. Program Participation and Delayed Payments

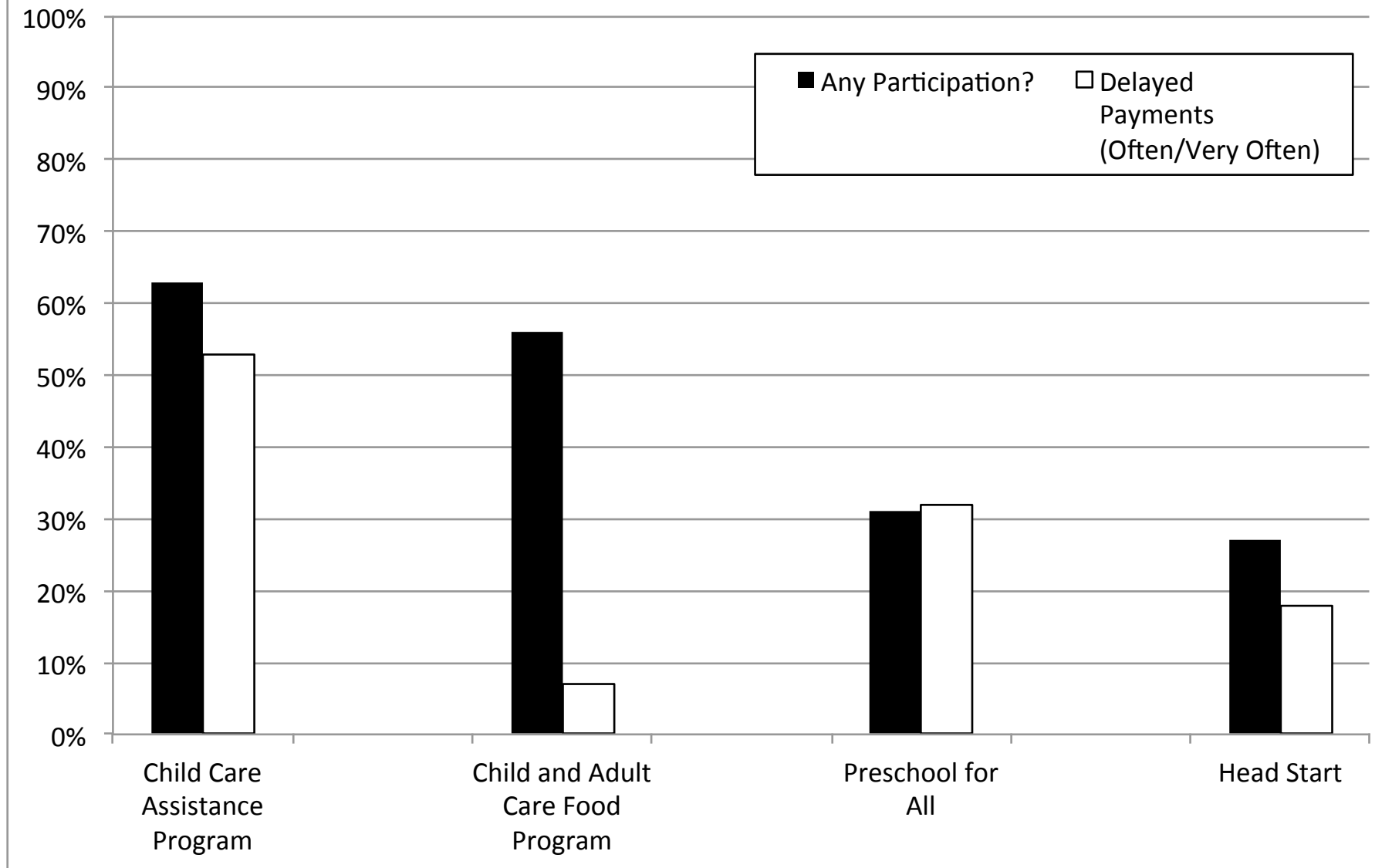


Table 1. Descriptive Statistics about the Head Start Program in the CAS 2012

	Sample Size	Overall Mean	Means within Types of ZIP Codes					
			Mixed Race Low Income	Majority Black Low Income	Majority Hispanic Low Income	Majority White Middle Income	Majority White High Income	
Head Start								
Any participation?	229	27%	31%	63%	39%	14%	2%	
If did not participate, why not?								
Not enough families qualify	149	30%	30%	8%	21%	18%	51%	
If enough families qualify, why not participate?								
Too much oversight	105	33%	47%	36%	39%	30%	22%	
Too much paperwork	101	41%	56%	36%	45%	35%	33%	
Can't hire qualified teachers	107	21%	31%	25%	32%	17%	9%	
If do participate,								
How important to your program delivering quality care?								
Not at all	62	2%	0%	5%	0%	n/a	n/a	
A little	62	2%	9%	0%	0%	n/a	n/a	
Somewhat	62	10%	9%	9%	5%	n/a	n/a	
Very much	62	87%	82%	86%	95%	n/a	n/a	
How often have payments been delayed?								
Never	46	37%	n/a	31%	50%	n/a	n/a	
Sometimes	46	46%	n/a	50%	36%	n/a	n/a	
Often	46	9%	n/a	6%	7%	n/a	n/a	
Very often	46	9%	n/a	13%	7%	n/a	n/a	
If payments have been delayed, how much affect financial stability?								
Not at all	29	14%	n/a	18%	n/a	n/a	n/a	
A little	29	24%	n/a	9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Somewhat	29	17%	n/a	27%	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Very much	29	45%	n/a	45%	n/a	n/a	n/a	

Note. n/a = values not shown for fewer than 10 centers. The differences in sample size between reports about the importance of programs to quality and reports of delayed payments is due to more directors saying they do not know about delayed payments.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics about the Preschool for All Program in the CAS 2012

	Sample Size	Overall Mean	Means within Types of ZIP Codes					
			Mixed Race Low Income	Majority Black Low Income	Majority Hispanic Low Income	Majority White Middle Income	Majority White High Income	
Preschool For All								
Any participation?	225	31%	49%	46%	36%	26%	10%	
If did not participate, why not?								
Not enough families qualify	123	34%	25%	24%	17%	31%	59%	
If enough families qualify, why not participate?								
Too much oversight	80	25%	33%	23%	22%	19%	31%	
Too much paperwork	83	23%	38%	17%	21%	18%	24%	
Can't hire qualified teachers	84	23%	23%	46%	21%	23%	6%	
If do participate,								
How important to your program delivering quality care?								
Not at all	70	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a	
A little	70	3%	6%	6%	0%	0%	n/a	
Somewhat	70	11%	12%	6%	11%	15%	n/a	
Very much	70	86%	82%	88%	89%	85%	n/a	
How often have payments been delayed?								
Never	60	35%	36%	38%	44%	31%	n/a	
Sometimes	60	33%	57%	23%	38%	23%	n/a	
Often	60	15%	7%	31%	6%	15%	n/a	
Very often	60	17%	0%	8%	13%	31%	n/a	
If payments have been delayed, how much affect financial stability?								
Not at all	37	14%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
A little	37	24%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Somewhat	37	22%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Very much	37	41%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Do you think that the state should:								
Provide funding for all children to attend preschool	225	74%	79%	86%	87%	63%	61%	
Provide funding only for at-risk children to attend preschool	225	25%	21%	14%	13%	35%	39%	
Not provide any funding for preschool	225	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	

Note. n/a = values not shown for fewer than 10 centers. The differences in sample size between reports about the importance of programs to quality and reports of delayed payments is due to more directors saying they do not know about delayed payments.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics about the Child and Adult Care Food Program in the CAS 2012

	Sample Size	Overall Mean	Means within Types of ZIP Codes				
			Mixed Race Low Income	Majority Black Low Income	Majority Hispanic Low Income	Majority White Middle Income	Majority White High Income
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)							
Any participation?	223	56%	66%	94%	64%	55%	16%
If did not participate, why not?							
Not enough families qualify	82	51%	25%	n/a	20%	48%	79%
If enough families qualify, why not participate?							
Too much oversight	42	21%	n/a	n/a	25%	17%	n/a
Too much paperwork	42	24%	n/a	n/a	17%	25%	n/a
If do participate,							
How important to your program delivering quality care?							
Not at all	125	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a
A little	125	2%	9%	0%	0%	0%	n/a
Somewhat	125	6%	4%	3%	6%	7%	n/a
Very much	125	93%	87%	97%	94%	93%	n/a
How often have payments been delayed?							
Never	101	67%	67%	61%	70%	75%	n/a
Sometimes	101	26%	20%	36%	19%	25%	n/a
Often	101	1%	0%	4%	0%	0%	n/a
Very often	101	6%	13%	0%	11%	0%	n/a
If payments have been delayed, how much affect financial stability?							
Not at all	31	23%	n/a	18%	n/a	n/a	n/a
A little	31	26%	n/a	27%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Somewhat	31	29%	n/a	45%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Very much	31	23%	n/a	9%	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note. n/a = values not shown for fewer than 10 centers. The differences in sample size between reports about the importance of programs to quality and reports of delayed payments is due to more directors saying they do not know about delayed payments.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics about the Child Care Assistance Program in the CAS 2012

	Sample Size	Overall Mean	Means within Types of ZIP Codes				
			Mixed Race Low Income	Majority Black Low Income	Majority Hispanic Low Income	Majority White Middle Income	Majority White High Income
Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)							
Any participation?	224	63%	78%	71%	65%	73%	37%
If did not participate, why not?							
Not enough families qualify	64	52%	n/a	n/a	13%	67%	70%
If enough families qualify, why not participate?							
Too much oversight	30	20%	n/a	n/a	33%	n/a	n/a
Too much paperwork	29	17%	n/a	n/a	25%	n/a	n/a
Low reimbursement rate	27	15%	n/a	n/a	33%	n/a	n/a
If do participate,							
How important to your program delivering quality care?							
Not at all	142	4%	4%	0%	3%	3%	11%
A little	142	4%	4%	0%	6%	0%	16%
Somewhat	142	10%	11%	4%	9%	11%	16%
Very much	142	82%	82%	96%	83%	86%	58%
How often have payments been delayed?							
Never	134	10%	4%	9%	6%	22%	0%
Sometimes	134	37%	56%	17%	39%	33%	42%
Often	134	22%	16%	39%	23%	8%	37%
Very often	134	31%	24%	35%	32%	36%	21%
If payments have been delayed, how much affect financial stability?							
Not at all	119	14%	13%	14%	21%	7%	16%
A little	119	13%	17%	5%	4%	14%	32%
Somewhat	119	18%	17%	24%	18%	21%	11%
Very much	119	54%	52%	57%	57%	57%	42%
Does reimbursement rate cover private rate?							
If no, do you charge families difference?	72	44%	29%	n/a	42%	57%	56%
If no, to what extent limit spending?							
Not at all	41	20%	40%	n/a	n/a	9%	n/a
A little	41	17%	10%	n/a	n/a	18%	n/a
Somewhat	41	20%	30%	n/a	n/a	18%	n/a
Very much	41	44%	20%	n/a	n/a	55%	n/a
If no, to what extent lead you to raise rates?							
Not at all	40	45%	60%	n/a	n/a	40%	n/a
A little	40	10%	10%	n/a	n/a	10%	n/a
Somewhat	40	33%	30%	n/a	n/a	40%	n/a
Very much	40	13%	0%	n/a	n/a	10%	n/a

Table continues

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics about the Child Care Assistance Program in the CAS 2012 (continued)

	Sample Size	Overall Mean	Means within Types of ZIP Codes				
			Mixed Race Low Income	Majority Black Low Income	Majority Hispanic Low Income	Majority White Middle Income	Majority White High Income
How often have parents been unable to pay in last year?							
Never	76	11%	19%	n/a	8%	4%	19%
Sometimes	76	43%	50%	n/a	38%	58%	19%
Often	76	29%	13%	n/a	23%	21%	56%
Very often	76	17%	19%	n/a	31%	17%	6%
What do you do when parents cannot pay?							
Work out a payment plan	68	75%	77%	n/a	67%	74%	69%
Allow parents to skip payments	68	18%	8%	n/a	33%	13%	31%
Exclude children from care until paid in full	68	7%	15%	n/a	0%	13%	0%
Should the state provide funding for families to use child care?							
Yes, for all families	226	46%	56%	49%	46%	47%	35%
Yes, but only for low-income families	226	51%	41%	51%	48%	53%	60%
No, state should not provide any funding for child care	226	2%	3%	0%	2%	0%	6%
If a center accepted children who received child care subsidies, how many parents might worry that the quality of care would decrease?							
A lot	219	6%	6%	3%	4%	4%	12%
Some	219	20%	21%	6%	15%	20%	33%
Not very many	219	24%	33%	17%	12%	28%	33%
None	219	50%	39%	74%	69%	48%	22%
If a center accepted children who received child care subsidies, how many parents might worry that the fees for other children would increase?							
A lot	221	9%	3%	17%	11%	4%	10%
Some	221	24%	35%	11%	22%	20%	33%
Not very many	221	26%	26%	26%	22%	33%	24%
None	221	40%	35%	46%	44%	43%	33%
How many parents might prefer a center that accepts subsidies because the subsidy provides a steady funding source from the state?							
A lot	217	32%	44%	43%	42%	29%	9%
Some	217	24%	18%	26%	23%	25%	28%
Not very many	217	18%	21%	9%	19%	19%	21%
None	217	25%	18%	23%	17%	25%	40%
How many parents might prefer a center that accepts subsidies because it means the program is more diverse?							
A lot	222	29%	41%	26%	26%	32%	22%
Some	222	36%	35%	37%	33%	36%	41%
Not very many	222	18%	9%	17%	24%	14%	24%
None	222	16%	15%	20%	17%	16%	12%

Note. n/a = values not shown for fewer than 10 centers. The differences in sample size between reports about the importance of programs to quality and reports of delayed payments is due to more directors saying they do not know about delayed payments.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics about the Quality Counts Quality Rating System in the CAS 2012

	Sample Size	Overall Mean	Means within Types of ZIP Codes				
			Mixed Race Low Income	Majority Black Low Income	Majority Hispanic Low Income	Majority White Middle Income	Majority White High Income
Quality Counts Quality Rating Systems							
Any participation?	229	28%	39%	29%	35%	25%	17%
If did not participate, why not?							
Families in the area don't use it to choose care	123	37%	38%	19%	17%	40%	58%
If enough families qualify, why not participate?							
Too much oversight	80	28%	n/a	31%	26%	29%	27%
Too much paperwork	81	27%	20%	31%	32%	19%	33%
Have not been licensed long enough	85	9%	9%	0%	24%	10%	0%
Worried about a low score	85	15%	18%	13%	10%	27%	7%
If do participate, why?							
Center benefits financially	64	89%	100%	n/a	84%	85%	n/a
Confident would score well	62	95%	92%	n/a	100%	92%	n/a
Families in the area use it to select preschool	61	57%	42%	60%	74%	67%	n/a
Enough staff to complete training	64	88%	79%	80%	94%	100%	n/a
How important to your program delivering quality care?							
Not at all	65	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a
A little	65	8%	14%	10%	0%	0%	n/a
Somewhat	65	18%	14%	20%	11%	31%	n/a
Very much	65	74%	71%	70%	89%	69%	n/a
If aware of the Quality Counts program, think it should be mandatory?	195	35%	29%	34%	45%	37%	30%

Note. n/a = values not shown for fewer than 10 centers. The differences in sample size between reports about the importance of programs to quality and reports of delayed payments is due to more directors saying they do not know about delayed payments.

About the Study

The Chicago Area Study is a biennial study that collects survey data on life in the Chicago metropolitan area. Its purpose is to collect original social science data that inform policymaking and social science theory, provide hands-on methods training to students in survey research methods, and fund faculty research on pressing issues in the metro area.

The overarching goal of the 2012 Chicago Area Study was to reveal how early childhood programs were coping with the “great recession” and how this economic crisis may be widening disparities in access to early childhood programs. The study also examined four central themes: (1) disparities in access to and utilization of child care, (2) providers’ knowledge, experience, and attitudes toward state and local programs and policies, (3) providers’ knowledge of and relationships with other child care providers and other service providers in the community, and (4) how providers perceived professional definitions of child care quality and alternative cultural definitions of child care quality.

Rachel Gordon, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), was the faculty investigator for the 2012 Chicago Area Study.

Anna Colaner, Graduate Student in the UIC Department of Sociology, was the project director for the 2012 Chicago Area Study. Many additional UIC students helped design the study and collect the data.

Maria Krysan, Professor in the Department of Sociology and Institute of Government and Public Affairs at UIC, directs the Chicago Area Study.

The UIC Survey Research Lab conducted phone interviews with center directors.

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Additional information is available online: <http://igpa.uillinois.edu/cas/>