

Nontraditional Hour Child Care Illinois Provider Survey

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Acknowledgements

Illinois Nontraditional-Hour Child Care Study (INCCS) A Research-Policy Partnership



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Definition of Nontraditional-hour Child Care

Nontraditional-hour child care (NTH): takes place outside of standard day time, weekday hours and includes:

- Weekday early mornings—any time before 7 a.m.
- Weekday evenings—any time after 6 p.m.
- Overnight—any time between 12 a.m. and 4 a.m.
- Weekends—any time Saturday or Sunday.
- Irregular schedules – emergency, variable hour, and holiday care

Project Background

Problem: There is a high need for nontraditional hour (NTH) child care but the supply of this care is very limited.

Project Goals:

- To better understand NTH care, the experiences of providers who offer this care, their motivations for offering it, and the challenges they face.
- Inform policymakers how they can better support providers who offer this care and increase the supply of it in Illinois.

Method: Survey of child care providers in Illinois in Spring of 2024



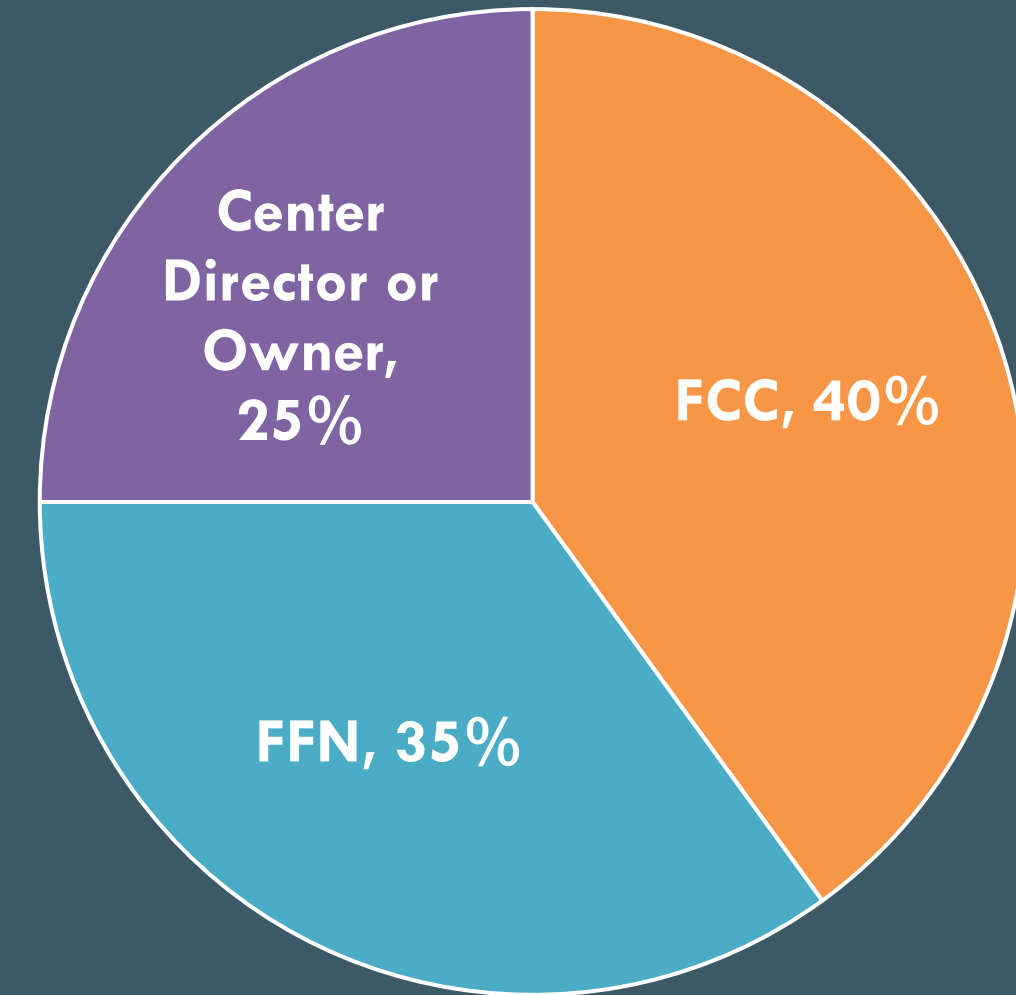
Who Responded

434 providers responded

- 76% offered at least one NTH schedule
- 24% offered only standard hour care
- 42% White, 41% Black and 12% Latino/a, Latinx, Hispanic

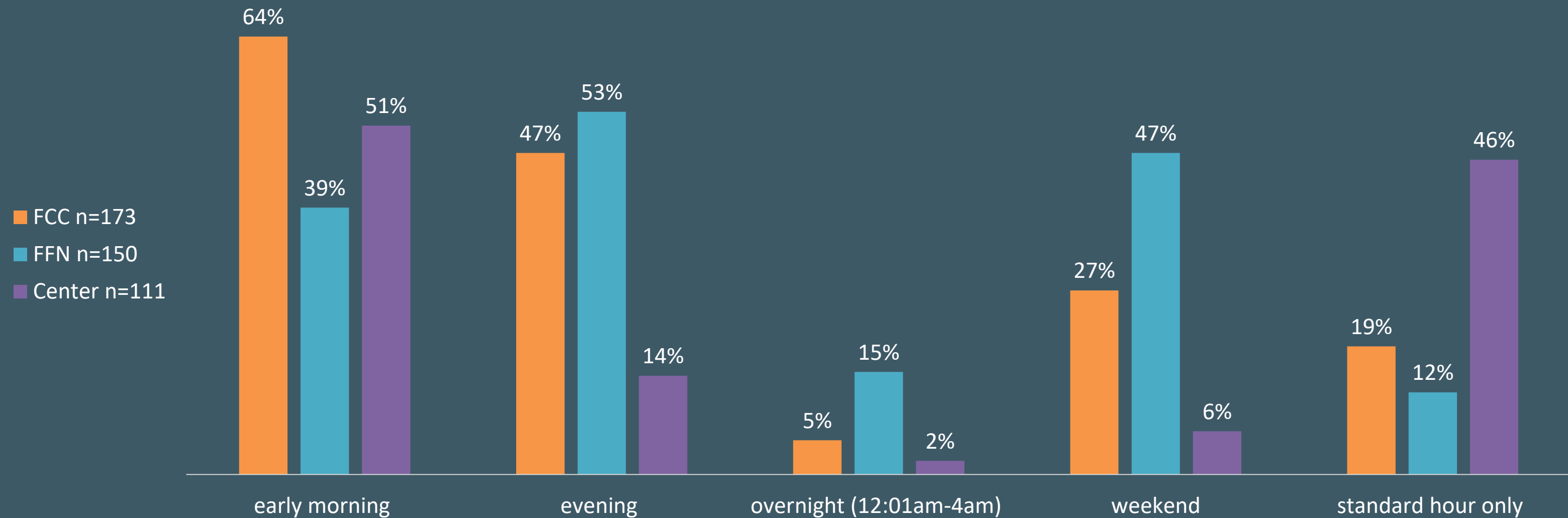
Black providers, providers ages 55 to 64, and large centers (100+ children) were more likely to offer a NTH schedule than only a standard-hour schedule.

Provider type



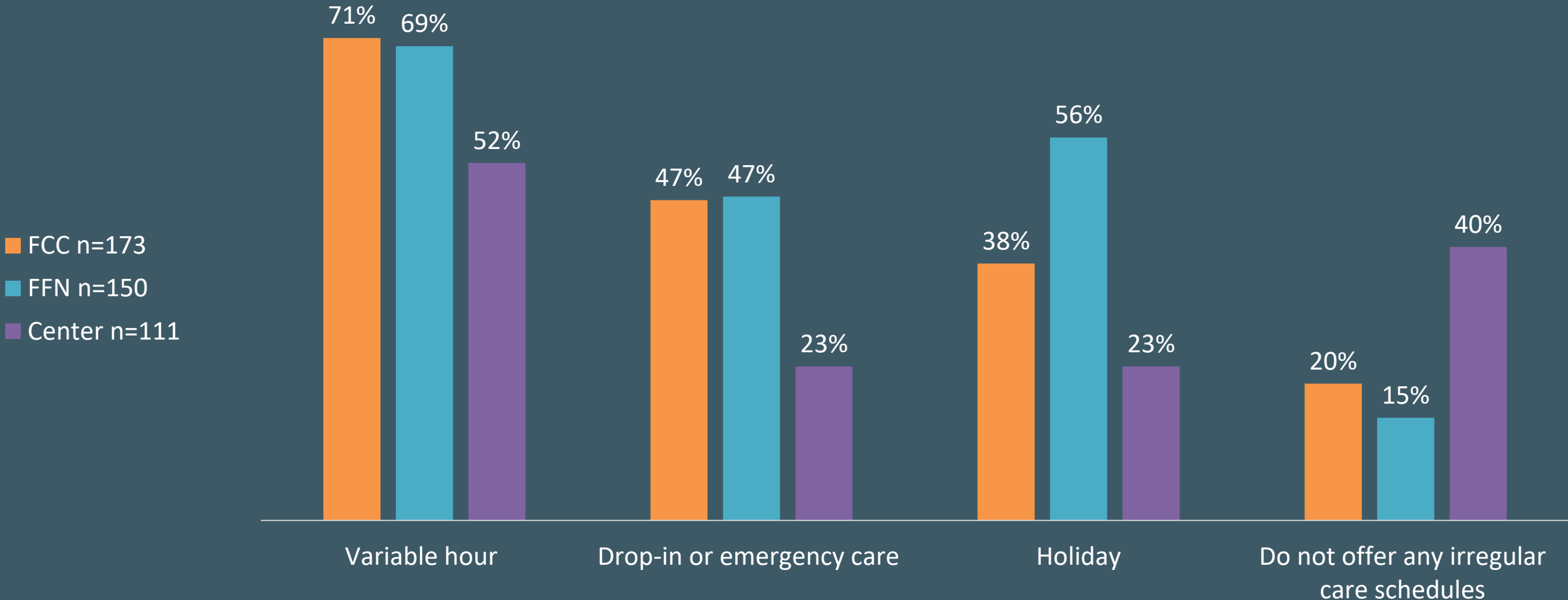
Who Offers NTH Care Schedules

Schedules offered by Provider Type



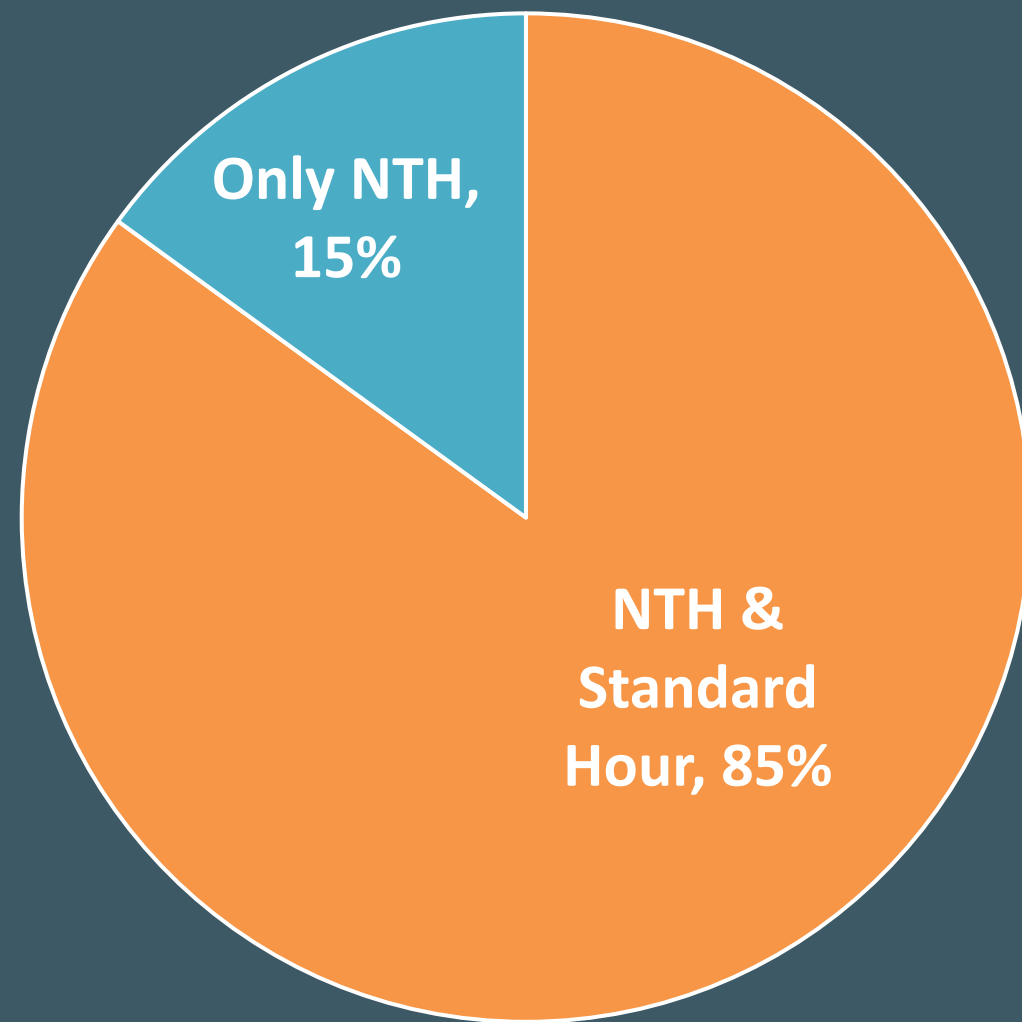
Who Offers Irregular Care Schedules

Irregular Schedules Offered by Provider Type



Provider Work Hours

Providers who offer NTH child care (n=284)



Long work hours:

- Tend to offer multiple NTH schedules
- Work 14 hours per day on average
- Many FCCs work these hours without additional staff
- Centers need to manage multiple shifts for staff

Unique Qualities of NTH Child Care

Focus on free play and relaxation rather than structured curriculum

“Children are typically still tired from getting up so early. We provide quiet time, soft music, cots if children need more rest and quiet activities.”- FCC, early morning care

Incorporate personal care and bedtime routines

“I will bathe them, feed them dinner, read to them and put them to bed after they brush their teeth.” – FFN, overnight care

More trips and outings, children integrated into family routines

“We will go to museums or zoos or do other activities that we don't do during the week.” – FFN, weekend care

Fewer children in care: individualized attention and mixed age groups

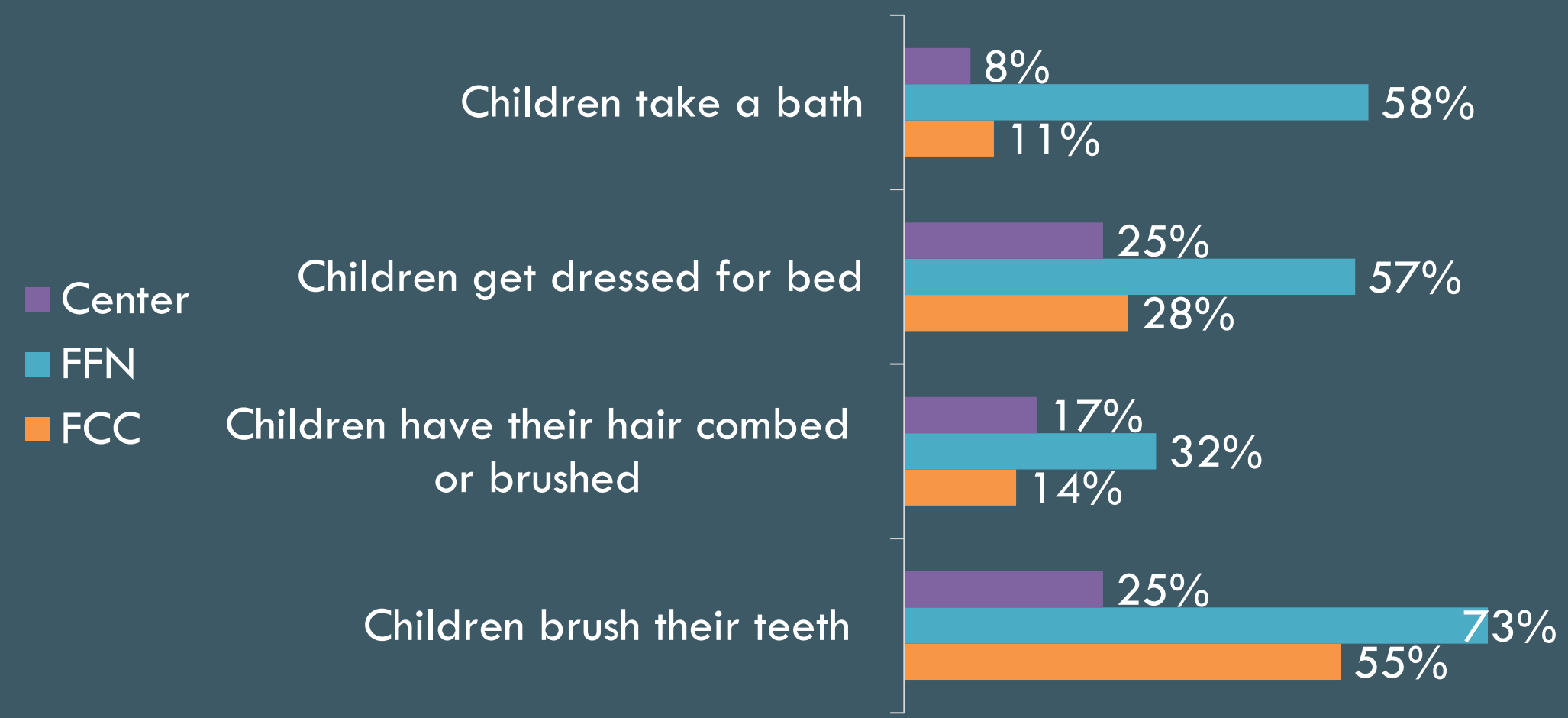
“We gather the remaining children and do a small group activity while waiting for parents to pick up.” – Center, evening care

More school age children: homework support, school pick-up and drop-off

“They are all school-aged in the evening, so they have homework and projects to complete.” – FCC, evening care

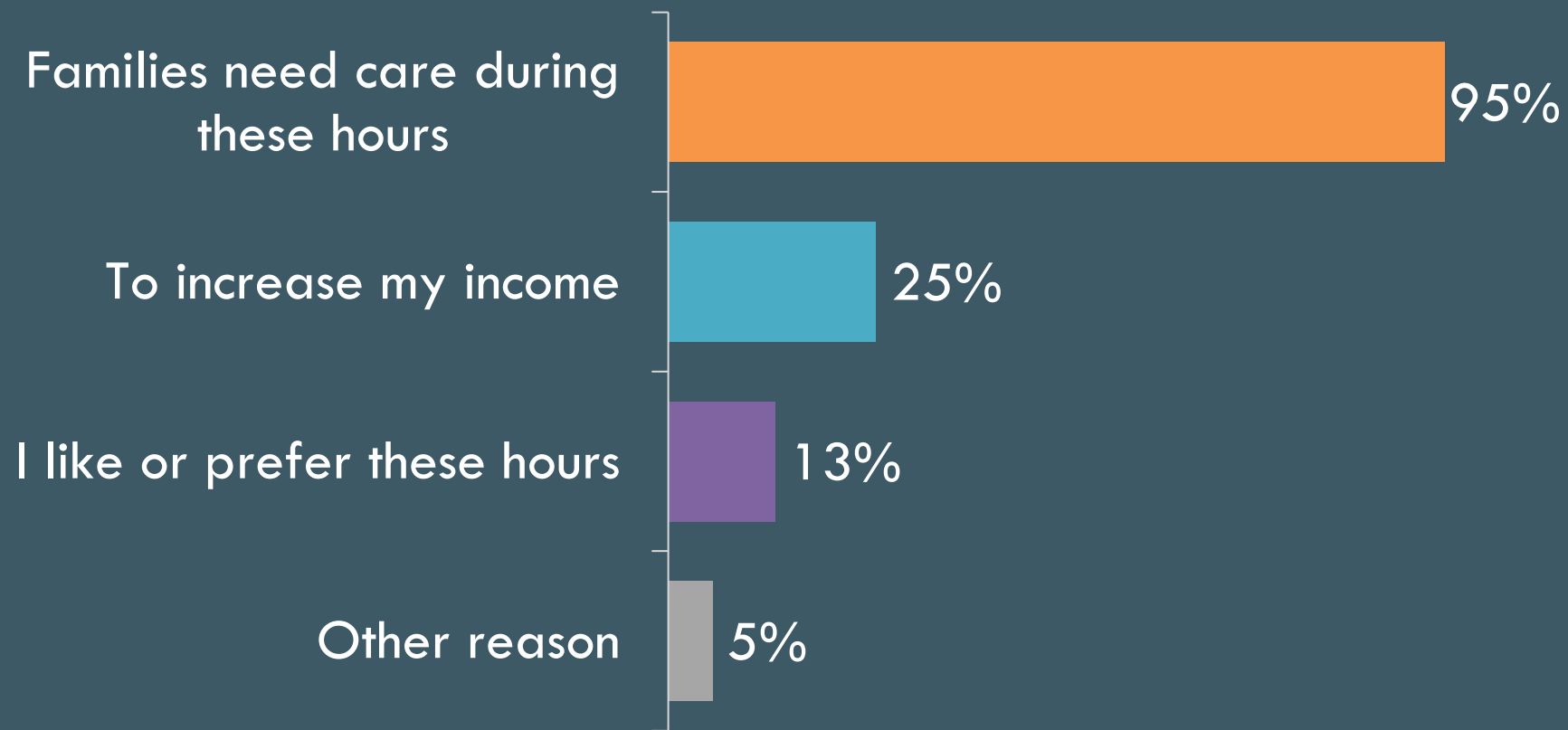
FFNs are More Likely to Incorporate Personal Care Routines

Evening Personal Care Routines



Why They Offer NTH Care

Reason Providers Offer NTH Child Care



Helping families in need and accommodating their work schedule: *“I am able to provide care for working families that cannot find care in most locations at the times they need.”*

Providing a safe environment for children: *“I know it's hard to find childcare for evenings and weekend. I prefer the parents to have a safe learning environment then for them to try to leave them at home by their self”*

Enjoy caring for children and providing individualized care: *“I love the nontraditional hours for I get to be 1-on-1 with the children.”*

Top Challenges with Offering NTH Care

Long work hours and inconsistent schedules

"It makes my days/working hours very long for insufficient pay." - FCC

No time for self or their families

"I have a family of my own so sometimes offering these services for daycare families cuts into my personal time with my own family." - FCC

Difficulty finding and retaining staff

"The hardest part is staffing. We open at 5:15 am and close at 5:30 pm. Adequately staffing classrooms for twelve-hour days is challenging." – Center

Lack of parent communication and punctuality

"Some parents don't give you a notice when they're not attending, so you're waiting." - FFN

NTH schedules are difficult for the children in care

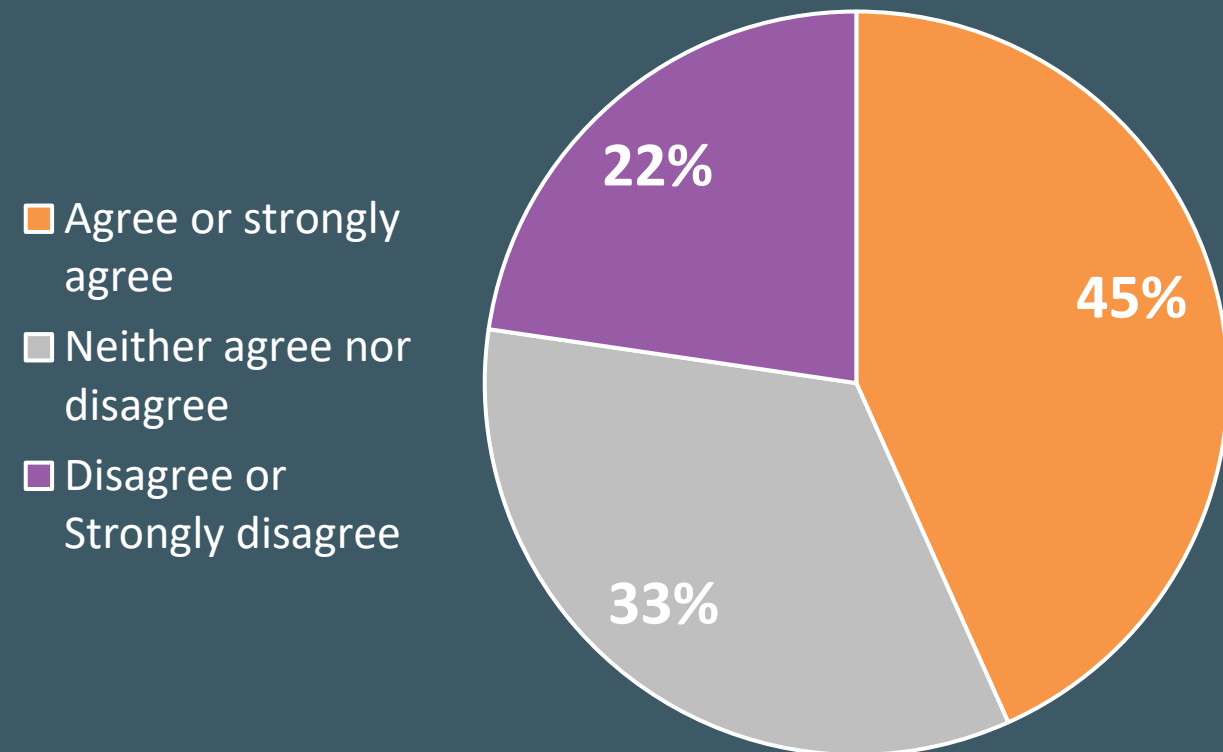
"Being away from the parents on a weekend not as many children to play with"- Center

Some Licensing Rules Were Burdensome During NTHs

- **Restrictions on the number of hours they can care for children:** *“I often have to amend my license to meet the requirements for clients with nontraditional hours.”*
- **Staff to child ratios are more difficult when caring for few children across many age groups during NTH:** *“The requirement of more than one staff on hand is silly when I only have 2 or 3 children for the first hour... having to pay multiple staff to watch them is a strain on payroll.”*
- **Difficult to find time to complete required trainings:** *“You are required to take training courses every year; finding time for training becomes a little more difficult.”*

Additional Costs for NTH Providers

Does NTH Care Increase Provider Expenses?



Top expenses for providers:

- Increased administration time to manage the scheduling of children and staff (centers)
- Hiring additional staff (centers)
- Food for additional meals and snacks
- Equipment such as linens, beds, toys
- Increased utility fees
- Paying assistant

Training or Supports That Would Help Providers

Activities and training specific to NTH care

Funding to increase wages, attract and retain staff and cover expenses

Resources and strategies for success for NTH providers

No additional training needed

- *“There’s just no trainings available; having trainings that support staff in understanding this type of care and activities that support the children would be helpful.” – Center*
- *“A more competitive rate is needed. Generally, pay for school-age children is very low, if they need care from 5:00 to 8:30 am, you start work at 4 am for \$20 a day... that is too low.” – FCC*
- *“Training on how to transition into a second shift. Finding parents who need care from 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm.” – Center*
- *“I feel like we have ample training as licensed providers and care is care to me, doesn't matter what time it occurs.” – FCC*

Why Some Providers Choose Not To Offer NTH Care

Why They Don't Offer It

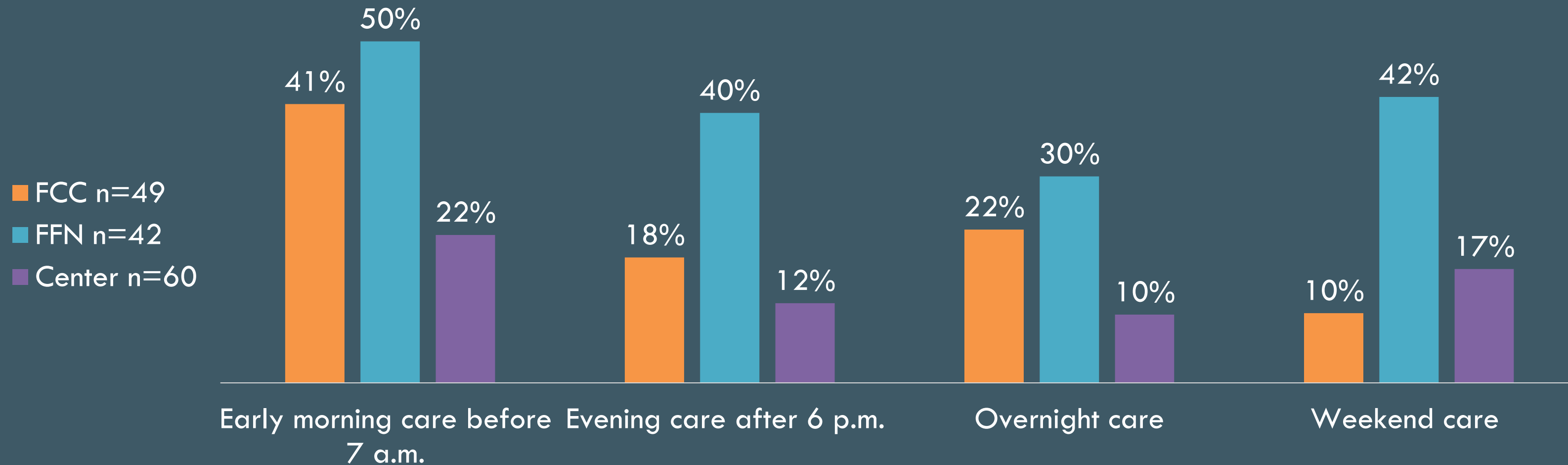
- Staffing challenges (centers)
- Lack of time, already work too many hours
- Offering this care would increase their stress
- Insufficient demand
- Not profitable or worthwhile due to low pay

What Would Motivate Them to Offer it

- Higher pay
- Staff willing to work these hours (centers)
- Increased demand
- Nothing

Interest in Offering NTH Child Care

Providers Interested in Offering NTH Care
(among providers not currently offering it)



Increasing Supply Through Policy Changes

Fairly Compensate NTH workforce

- Pay providers a premium for NTH hours (possibly through CCAP add-ons)
- Increase compensation for child care staff in licensed programs

Strengthen support for FFN providers

- Adjust federal requirements for FFN care to increase participation
- Increase CCAP reimbursement rates for FFN providers

Minimize Barriers

- Enhance the referral process at the state's CCR&R agencies to help providers find parents who need this care
- Minimize licensing challenges

Offer Optional Training and Resources

- Creative activities tailored to NTH schedules
- Training specific to NTH routines and practices

Questions?

Thank you!

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