



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

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## 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?

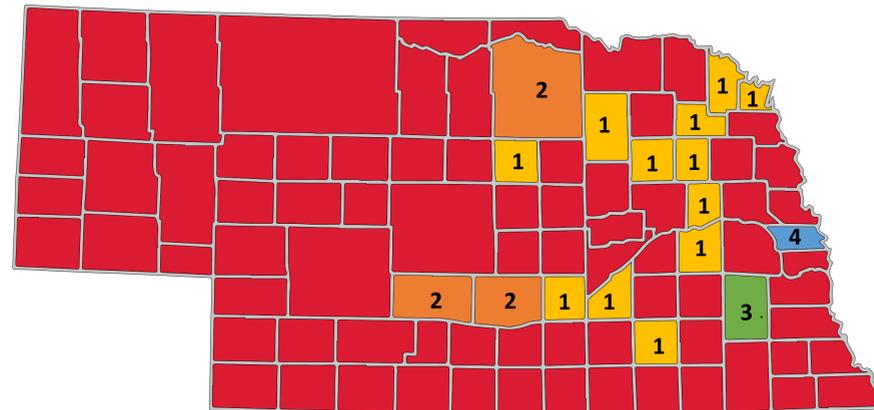
## METHODS

**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



### Third Trimester

- Began collecting data in January 2018. Currently have 27 participants
- Semistructured interviews and online surveys
- Perceived supports, stressors, economic hardship, perceptions of accessible, affordable, and available child care in local community

### Baby is 3-4 months

- In home interviews and surveys (paper or online)
- Supports, parenting, coparenting, stressors
- Child care decisions
- Child care caregiver survey
- Observations (HOME) and caregiver child interactions

### Baby is 9-12 months old

- In home interviews and surveys (paper or online)
- Supports, parenting, coparenting, stressors
- Child care decisions
- Child care caregiver survey
- Observations (HOME) and caregiver child interactions

## PARTICIPANTS

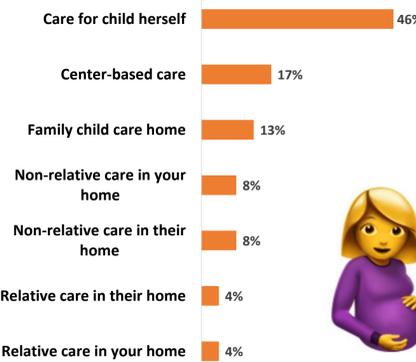
25 working, pregnant mothers have participated to date. All participants are employed full-time. Twenty-three (92%) participants indicated they are married or in a domestic partnership, and 64% (n=16) currently have other children.

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.