

# Cornell University Faculty Work Life Survey

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## Child Care Needs Among Faculty

May 2006

*Prepared by Institutional Research and Planning  
in consultation with the Provost's Advisory Committee on Faculty Work Life*

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In November of 2004, Provost Biddy Martin charged an Advisory Committee on Faculty Work Life "to examine the tenured and tenure-track faculty work life and working climate, with a special emphasis on the experiences of women faculty." A Faculty Work Life (FWL) Survey grew out of this effort. Among a variety of other domains, the FWL Survey included a series of items relevant to the child care needs of the faculty. This document focuses narrowly on the those items.

The FWL Survey was administered to Cornell faculty in the Fall of 2005. Out of the 1,465 tenured and tenure-track faculty invited to participate, 962 faculty answered at least some part of the survey, for a response rate of 65%. (We did not invite faculty in the first year of their contract at Cornell to respond.) Our survey data includes 263 women and 699 men. For more information on the response rate, see the companion document "Response Rates and Patterns." Other companion documents include "An Overview of Responses" and "Understanding Faculty Satisfaction."

Comments and suggestions are welcome and may be shared with a member of the committee (see right); Marin Clarkberg in Institutional Research and Planning, <mec30@cornell.edu>; or Patty Ard in the Office of the Provost, <pma2@cornell.edu>.

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Figure 1. Faculty Respondents with Children, by Age of Child

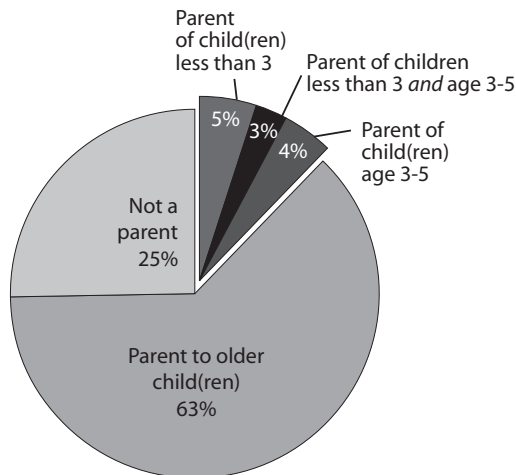
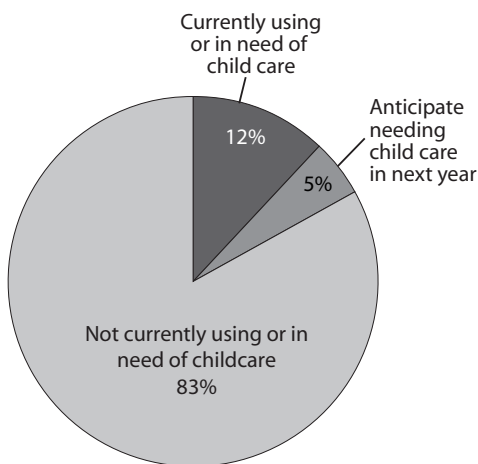


Figure 2. Need for Child Care Among Faculty Respondents



## A. Faculty with Children and the Need for Child Care

Three-quarters of responding faculty indicated that they had children. (This figure is consistent with that estimated from the Cornell *Survey of Faculty Interaction with Undergraduate Students*, collected in Spring of 2004.) Reflecting the age demographic of the faculty population (in which half of all faculty invited to participate in our survey were 57 years old or older), the bulk of faculty children are school-aged or older. But approximately 12% of faculty members—or about 1-in-8—had one or more children age five or younger (see Figure 1). Extrapolated out to the entire faculty population, the estimates in Figure 1 suggest that there may be about 120 faculty members (8%) with children under the age of three years, and an additional 60 or so with one or more children age 3 to 5.

Again reflecting the age demographics of parenthood, parents of children under the age of five were more likely to be assistant professors and generally earned less than those without young children in the home. Indeed, 27% of assistant professors have at least one child under the age of 5. There is a small gender difference in our sample, such that about 14% of female faculty have a child aged 5 or younger, as compared to 12% of male faculty.

The FWL Survey instrument asked respondents, “Are you currently using or in need of child care for a child/children under the age of 6?” Respondents chose from one of three responses:

- Yes, I am currently using or in need of child care for a child under the age of 6
- No, but I anticipate needing child care for a young child in the next year or so
- No

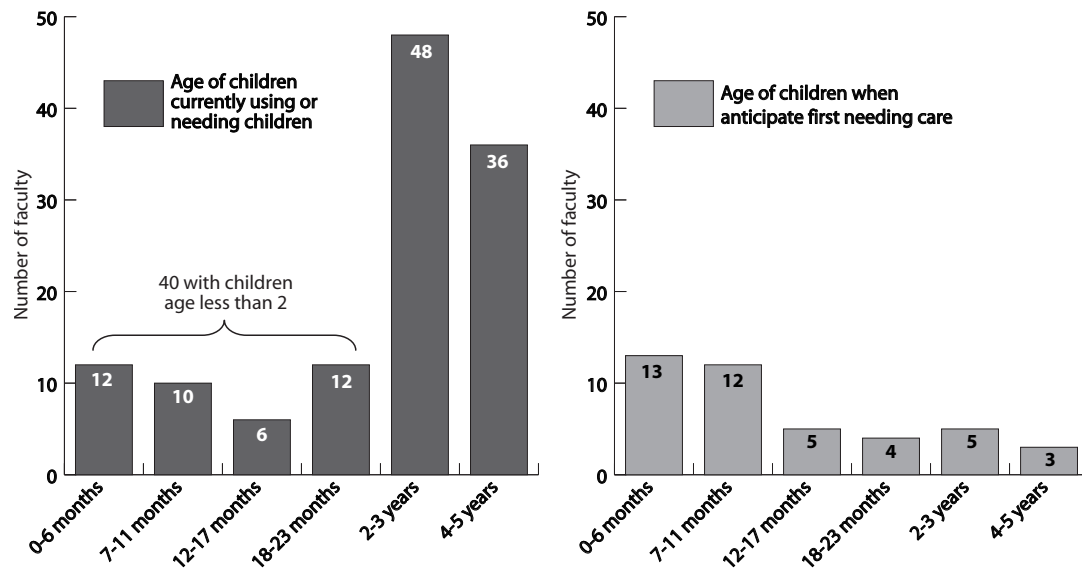
Twelve percent of faculty responded that they were currently using or in need of childcare (see Figure 2). In addition, 5% of responding faculty indicated that they anticipate needing childcare in the next year or so.

## B. Ages of Children in Child Care

Among responding faculty who indicated that they currently used or needed child care, forty responded that they used or need childcare for a child or children under the age of 2 (see Figure 3, next page). The use or need was slightly higher in the 2-3 age range, with 48 faculty indicating current use or need, and slightly lower for the 4-5 age range (which presumably includes some kindergartners).

Faculty respondents who indicated anticipating child care in the next year or so were more likely to anticipate needing care for an infant under a year of age (with 25 faculty responding this way, see Figure 3) than for a child between 12 months and 5 years (with 17 faculty indicating anticipated need for that age range, Figure 3).

Figure 3. Faculty Using, Needing or Anticipating Needing Childcare, by Age of Child

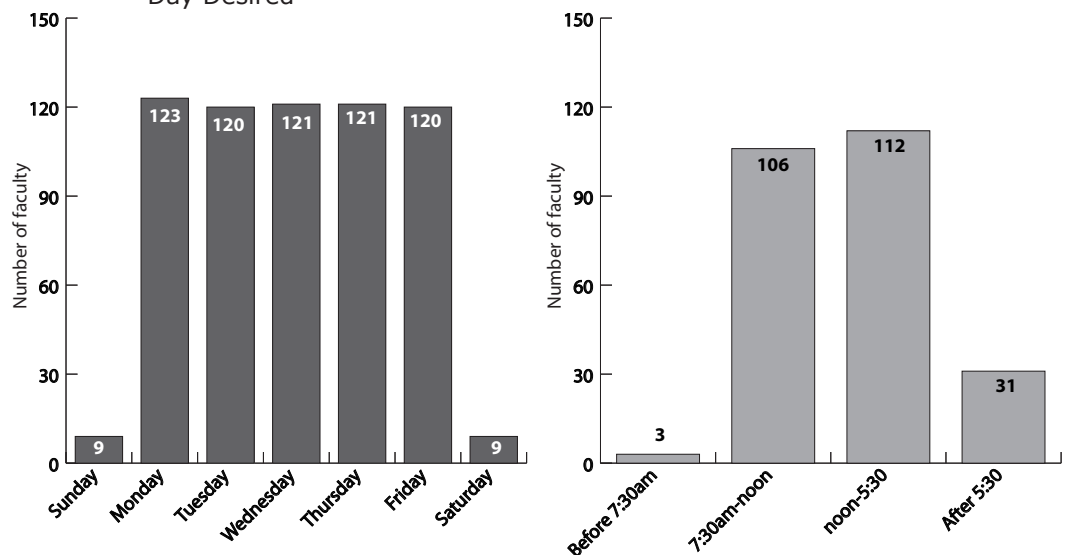


### C. Days and Times of Child Care

Faculty using, needing, or anticipating needing child care were asked, “Which days of the week do you currently need or anticipate needing childcare” as well as “What hours do you need or anticipate needing childcare?”

As shown in Figure 4, child care is far more frequently desired on weekdays than on weekends. Nine respondents indicated that they needed child care on Sunday; seven of those indicated that they needed seven days a week of child care and the other two indicated a desire for Sunday through Friday care. Similarly, seven of the nine respondents who indicated a need for Saturday childcare indicated a need for seven days of child care; the other two respondent wanted six days, excluding Sunday.

Figure 4. Faculty Using, Needing or Anticipating Needing Childcare, by Time and Day Desired



## D. Qualities Important in a Child Care Provider

Fully three-quarters of faculty using, needing, or anticipating needing child care consider “staff quality” to be “essential” in terms of importance in selecting a new care provider (see Figure 5).

Most respondents also identified location as a critical factor, with 58% considering “close to campus” and 54% considering “close to home” as “very important” or “essential.”

Overall, cost was not considered as important as staff quality or location, but more important than scheduling options.

Availability of part-time options were marked as “very important” or “essential” to 44% of responding faculty, and the availability of extended hours were valued this highly by 33% of respondents.

Figure 5. Importance of Various Factors in Selecting a Child Care Provider

