

Key Findings

Among students and staff at UAlberta, parents of young children consistently report:

- High levels of stress from balancing parenthood with school/work commitments.
- A need for just-in-time or drop-in supports.
- A need for more maternity/lactation spaces.
- A need for more change tables, and accessibility barriers with existing tables.
- Unacceptably long, sometimes multi-year, wait times for childcare spaces.

These survey findings align with anecdotal feedback from students who parent.

Survey Design

This survey was distributed informally through networks associated with several childcare centres on and around North Campus. It reached 54 points of contact (42 female, 12 male). Considering that Ancillary Services' three recent Housing for Students who Parent consultation rounds reached a total of 103 points of contact, we are satisfied with the size of our sample for purposes of highlighting the voices of parents on campus.

Of those parents, 4 were undergraduates, 11 were graduate students, 29 were academic staff, and 13 were non-academic staff. (A few respondents were both staff and students, and two 'other' responses were classified as non-academic staff.) None were younger than 25. 16 were age 25-34, one was 45 or older, and the remainder were 35-44. All but two raise their children with a partner or other major caregiver.

Due to our survey distribution methods, the sample prioritizes parents with young children.

| AGE OF CHILDREN | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 0-3 | 38 |
| 4-5 | 21 |
| 6-7 | 11 |
| 8-9 | 7 |
| 10+ | 1 |
| Prefer not to say | 0 |

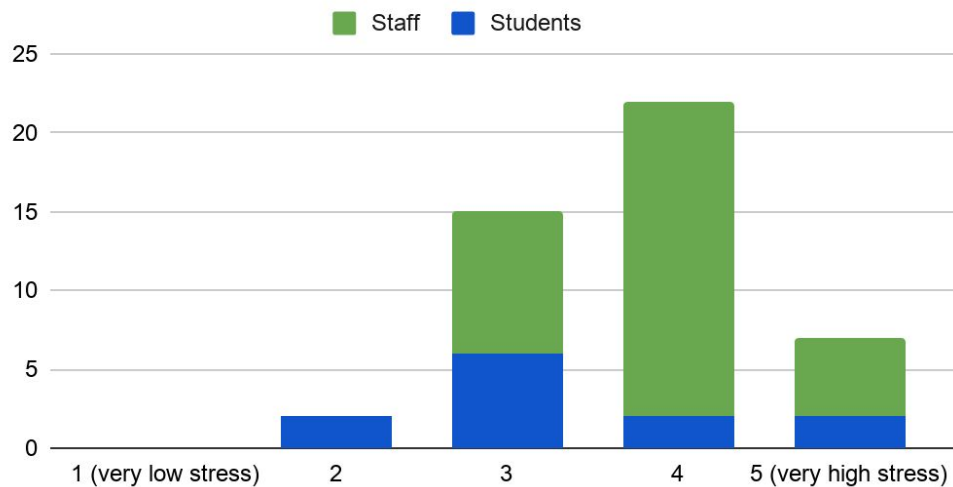
Respondents' children attend at least one of the six UAlberta-affiliated child care centres on or near North Campus:

| EARLY LEARNING CENTRE | LOCATION | ON CAMPUS? | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS |
|--|----------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Garneau and University Early Learning Centre | 10925 87 Avenue | No | 2 |
| Hospitals and Community Child Care Centre | 7127B Aberhart Centre One | Yes | 1 |
| McKernan Child Development Centre | 11103 76 Avenue | No | 8 |
| Students Union and Community Early Learning Centre | HUB Mall | Yes | 23 |
| University and Community Early Learning Centre | 8720 118 Street | No | 0 |
| University Infant Toddler Centre | 114 Street and University Avenue | No | 12 |

Stress

What is your average level of stress when balancing children/family with other responsibilities?

Average: 3.93/5



Q: "What supports or resources would help you manage stress better?"

Students:

- *Extended daycare hours on campus (I am willing to pay more). Not allowing professors to put program mandatory courses as evening courses only. Almost every semester one of my mandatory courses is an evening class (not other options). Therefore, I have to pay and find someone willing to pick up my daughter from daycare. This is not always possible, and then my only option is to skip class. My work's in construction and is often out of town.*
- *Financial Aid. Having a mindful space NOT like the HUB non-denominational prayer space - but rather a meditative space that is completely neutral.*
- *I hope there will be drop in daycare facility at school or more daycare options on campus. This will be a great help when taking class. It will be great if there are nursing room on campus. It will be great for mother who need to pump milk during the day.*
- *More affordable and available daycare/OSC throughout the city. More resources on campus for families. Flexibility with working hours.*
- *Childcare that has a reasonable wait list occasional child minding service (per hour)*
- *I need financial supports and I need high quality day care and school for my kids.*
- *Literally anything supporting students with children would be helpful. So far, all I know of is the childcare support money you can apply for and that is if you are making poverty-level income. A suggestion example: daycare fee reductions if you're a student at a U of A affiliated daycare.*
- *More accessible/flexible childcare options on campus, especially like short-term/half day daycare, and more spaces for kids < 1 year. Campus being more physically accessible would also make it less stressful to navigate*
- *The biggest challenges experienced when balancing the competing demands of work, school and parenting is time. Fixed deadlines and responsibilities at school and work mean that parents sacrifice time with their children, sleep or both.*
- *Your analog scale in Q3 isn't working for me. I would say I'm about a 6/10 [included in the above chart as 3/5], and that's mainly because I have reliable, high quality and affordable childcare. If I didn't have that, it would be much more difficult to balance family and school. Other things that would help would be peer support, like having a support network with other students where we could help each other (even as simple as helping watch each other's kids).*

Staff:

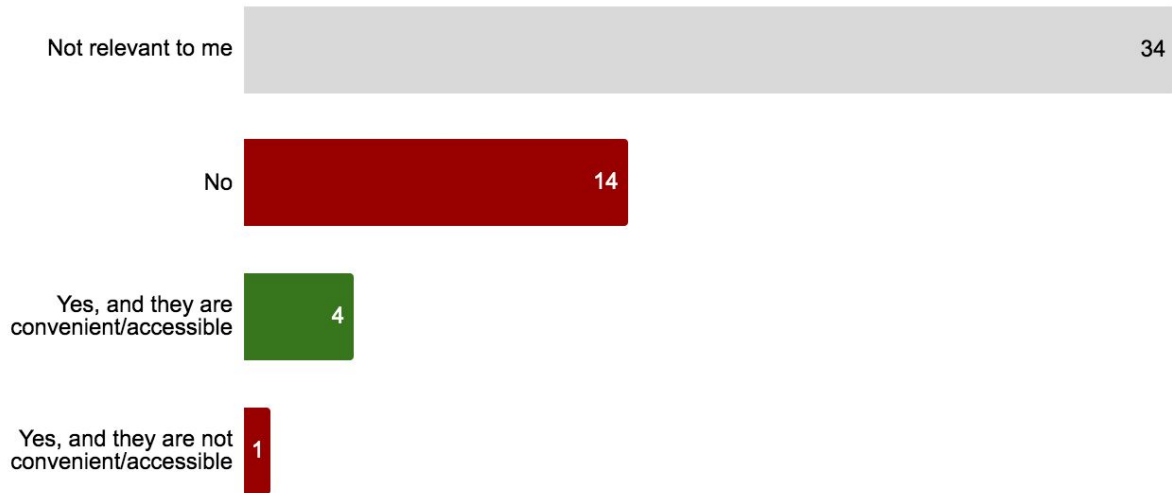
- *Affordable childcare, after hour options*
- *Back up care plan when the primary day care or school is closed due to PD day will help a lot. UofA used to have a back up care plan with "Kids and Company" which was really good and economical. It has changed from 350\$/15 sessions to 100\$/day which is very expensive.*

- *Better childcare benefits that extend beyond a certain age. After school expenses are high and the child care benefits go only until age 7 but care is required beyond this.*
- *Child care, supportive family members and colleagues/boss*
- *Child minding services.*
- *Collaborate with the educators in the room and get guidance on how to educate our kid.*
- *Daycare, friends*
- *Decreases day care fee*
- *Drop-in/hourly program. When I was a visiting scholar in Portland, I used this: <https://www.littlevikings.org>. I think something of the sort would be useful, also when inviting guests to campus.*
- *Family support. Parenting classes.*
- *Having family in the area would help or else more resources for finding help.*
- *Having more access to high quality affordable childcare on or near campus. Waiting lists are long and costs are high. I have to choose between paying my mortgage or childcare...and if I chose to pay the mortgage then who is going to watch my kids?*
- *Increased child care benefit*
- *Lower childcare fees at the on-campus daycare.*
- *Ministry approval and additional funding for an Aid. Our toddler has Type 1 Diabetes. Current staff is wonderful, but caring for and keeping Blood sugar levels in range for a 3 yrd old is like walking a tight rope while juggling flame throwers.*
- *More affordable daycare; university not scheduling things at pick-up time or in the evening*
- *More availability in daycares*
- *More child care options close to University. Flexible work hours and ability to work from home.*
- *More childcare available, subsidies, back up plan when child is unable to be at daycare (illness, PD closures, etc)*
- *More funding to cover the costs of daily childcare (daycare), more daycare spots available in or near campus.*
- *More job security.*
- *More on campus daycare options*
- *more time would be really good*
- *Not sure, more flexible hours of work maybe? Later pick up time.*
- *On site daycare in both our official languages.*
- *Subsidized daycare.*
- *The department kindly adjusted my teaching hours to fit my child's school hours. It was extremely helpful and appreciated.*
- *The early learning center on the campus did help me a lot with balancing family and work.*
- *We have great daycare. Just less work to do would be most helpful. We work day and night.*

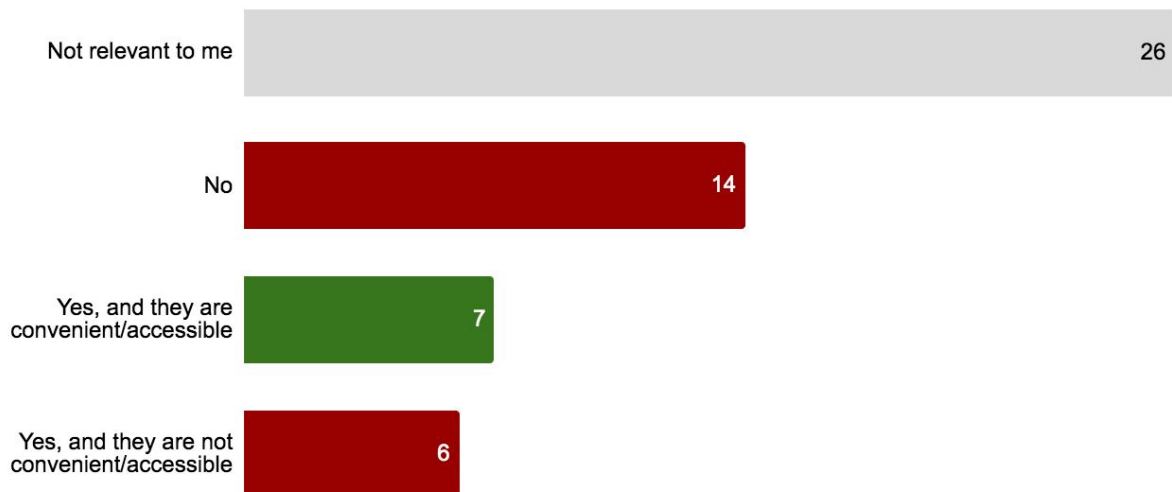
Campus Accessibility

Our survey demonstrates a need for both maternity/lactation spaces and change tables.

Do you have access to maternity/lactation spaces?



Do you have access to change tables?



Access to Childcare Providers

| <i>Average scores out of 5, with 5 being the highest</i> | In your opinion, how accessible are the ON-CAMPUS locations? | In your opinion, how accessible are the OFF-CAMPUS locations? |
|--|--|---|
| Parents whose children attend ON-CAMPUS locations | 3.96 | 2.88 |
| Parents whose children attend OFF-CAMPUS locations | 3.78 | 3.36 |

Q: "What has been your experience with wait times?"

Students:

- *In my experience my wait time at the SUCELC was ok.*
- *Most of them have more than 1.5 year waiting list. It is challenging to find a spot and mat leave is only 1 year.*
- *UNACCEPTABLE! It took my daughter 1.5 years to get into the daycare in HUB. So she needed to go to another daycare off-campus for the first 1.5 years.*
- *acceptable for some of the centres, and non-acceptable (too long for other ones e.g: hospital and community and university and community)*
- *I have been on the waitlist at UITC since May 2019 for a Sept 2020 spot. From what I understand, wait times are very long and I consider it unlikely I will have a space by the time I need it. Understand there is more demand than supply but it makes things especially challenging for students who parent.*
- *I waited one year for MCDC. That is reasonable. I wanted the UITF since I am in Corbett Hall and they told me it would be a three-year wait at the time. This is ridiculous.*
- *in Q11/12, do you mean accessible in terms of their physical location? Because I would answer that they are mostly very accessible. If you mean how easy to enrol or affordable for a student, then my answers would be very inaccessible.*
- *The wait list for University daycares is insanely long. With my first child, I registered her when I was 5 months pregnant in 3 facilities and never got a call until she was past daycare age. In fact I never got a call at all in spite of following up regularly with the daycare. I registered my second in two facilities when I was 5 months pregnant too, she is now 8 months and I keep following up with the daycares she's registered in but no spot is available yet (one of them only takes kids past 18 months so she did not reach the age yet). The wait lists are just unacceptably long.*
- *The waiting list was unacceptably long. My first kid got a position after waiting for almost 2 years.*

- *They are accessible in terms of geographic location / proximity to work but for many parents, day care on campus or off is cost prohibitive. The Student's Union Day Care (which is fantastic) has a waitlist and only takes children at 19 mos. The infant facility on campus is so long that it is not even worth your time to add your name to the list. The hours at day care can also be restrictive for meetings and other events occurring in the evening. Finally, the quality of day care across the city is not consistent.*

Staff:

- *19 months. Acceptable.*
- *2 years*
- *2-4 years, which is ridiculous.*
- *3 year waiting lists. Clearly not acceptable as I have to teach.*
- *Acceptable - it was long (15 months?) but I put my name down when I was pregnant so I got in.*
- *I am answering for the past (my children no longer attend UITC): the wait times are long. I got very lucky with my first child that I got on the list immediately and called all the time.*
- *I didn't even try on campus as my hours are so inflexible that my partner needed to be able to pick up our child at an off campus location*
- *I was on the waitlist for over 4 years. I signed up in August 2013 and got a spot at SUCDC in Sep of 2017. In the end, it was only because I wrote to the daycare and asked that I got in. I'm not really sure how the waitlist works or how effective it is as a means of access.*
- *I'm not sure what is meant by Q11 - accessible in terms of wait times or accessible in terms of location?? In terms of location, yes, very accessible. In terms of wait times, they are very long. We were on the wait list when my wife was 3 months pregnant and we just barely got a spot when my oldest son was 1 yr.*
- *Long wait period; few spaces for day care available.*
- *Lower than Vancouver. No worse than other similarly high quality centres in Edmonton.*
- *My children attended the daycare in HUB before school. Not a long wait list there. UITC was prohibitively long.*
- *My first child waited for more than 2 years for a vacancy. It is longer than expected but still understandable.*
- *Ok*
- *The wait times are quite long. For me it took two years for my first kid to get a spot.*
- *The waitlists are very long. We have been lucky but many have not been.*
- *Unacceptable.*
- *Unacceptable. The quality of care and facilities are not uniform across these six daycares. The wait times for the better ones are long.*
- *Very long. Unacceptable. I was fortunate an affiliated daycare became available but it was 1 month prior to when I needed. Blessed it was available but lost 1-month deposit at another location I had to secure.*

- *Very unacceptable to know you put your name down right when find out you are pregnant and still only a slim chance of getting in with no chance for on campus ones. More daycares are needed*
- *Wait time was about 15 months. Probably not acceptable as entered wait list before infant was born.*
- *Wait times are unacceptable (years in some cases).*
- *We waited about a year and a half for the first daycares (that child was admitted at 12 months), and closer to four years for the other one -- our younger child got in because our older child had been on the waitlist since the beginning of that first pregnancy, and they honored that time.*
- *We waited about half a year, which is ok. But we have heard about longer wait times and were expecting it when registering for the wait list.*
- *Complete unacceptable. I was on waitlist for 4 years before a spot opened.*
- *Most of them have more than 1.5 year waiting list. It's is challenging to find a spot and mat leave is only 1 year.*
- *Sometimes the wait times are extremely long, it depends*
- *Too long.*
- *Very long we applied two and a half years ago for some of the centres.*
- *We were lucky to be able to get into the daycare we preferred in less than a year. I think generally as a parent, hearing the 1-2 year wait is a bit stressful when you don't hear back prior to returning to work.*
- *When I emailed Univ Toddler center I was told to not bother and email my MLA, that I was not eligible due to wait time. I was fortunate to get a space quickly at Student Union and Community Early Learning Centre.*
- *For us, it was completely fine.*
- *We were lucky and a spot opened up for us but originally we were told it was a two year wait list, which is incredibly long.*