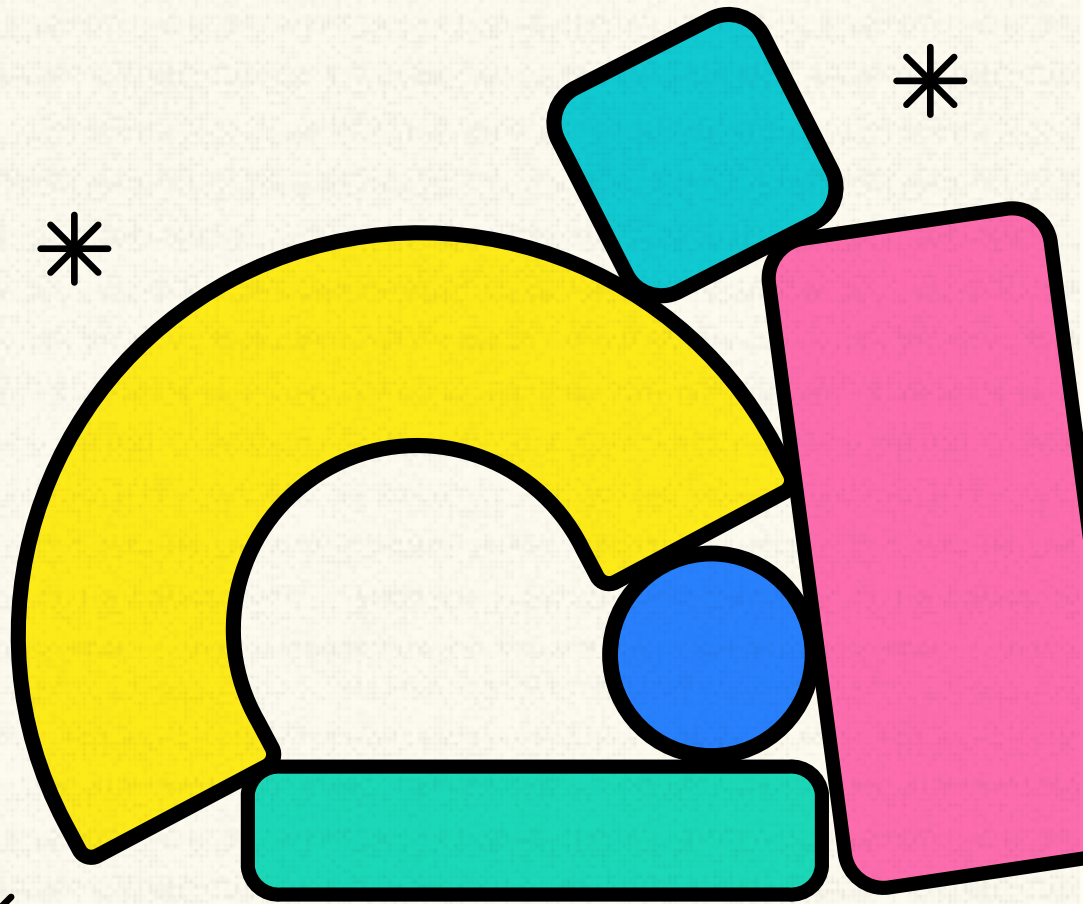




2021-22

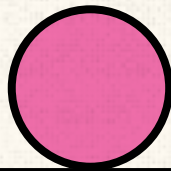
Childcare Parent Satisfaction Report

Learn what matters most from survey data
collected from hundreds of families.

Hello!

Contents

CHAPTER #	CHAPTER NAME	PAGE NUMBER
01	INTRODUCTION	04
02	MILLENNIAL PARENTHOOD	06
03	EDUCATION	10
04	COMMUNICATION	14
05	TECHNOLOGY	17
06	TUITION & PAYMENTS	19
07	CONCLUSION	23



CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Since childcare providers serve families with children ages zero to five, the expectations of parents are constantly changing. This year in particular can seem like there has been the most changes to what life looks like more than any year in recent memory.

Here's one fact about modern parenthood that needs to reframe how we think about educator-parent relationships: Many new parents need to select a childcare provider without ever stepping foot into the center.

Parting with your infant or toddler is hard enough as it is, but imagine doing so with zero physical interaction with those who you're handing your precious little one off to. Having experienced this firsthand, I can tell you that it is not easy.

Take a moment to think about what life five years ago looked like — it seems

almost unimaginable now. Commuting five days a week to work, having large social gatherings...these can seem like another lifetime for many people.

For those who have been in early childhood education for a while now, it can be difficult to really understand what it is like to have a young child in this day and age. The older we get, the harder it is to put ourselves in the shoes of first-time parents; in the midst of a global pandemic, this is actually impossible because we have never experienced this firsthand.

In the summer of 2021, HiMama conducted a comprehensive research study with 500 parents or primary guardians of children ages zero to five across the United States and Canada whose children are enrolled in a childcare program. We asked detailed questions about what it is like to be a primary caregiver in this day and age, what

their experience with childcare has been like, and what they would love to see from their providers. The results ran the gamut between confirming some of our beliefs as well as really challenging some of our assumptions.

Please take your time to carefully go through each of this report's findings and think about what you are currently doing that is serving today's families and what might not be. Parents' lives have changed, and with that so have their expectations for childcare. Adapting to these changes can be the difference between enrolling with you vs. enrolling with the provider down the street who is listening. We hope that this report will help put you inside of the mind of your newer families so you can provide care that truly reflects what their

expectations and needs are.

Being a childcare provider is never easy, and it has definitely gotten harder in the last few years. From all of us at HiMama, thank you for the essential service you provide, as well as for striving to improve the quality of your service by reading this report.



Ron Spreuwerberg

Chief Executive Officer
HiMama



CHAPTER TWO

Millennial Parenthood

We’ve all heard the term “Millennials” used countless times — often in a demeaning way to describe an entitled young person who is addicted to their phone. This, of course, is not a fair or accurate way to describe this age group. And for childcare providers, this is an especially important generation to understand, because Millennials can no longer be written off as demanding children. In fact, they are currently the ones who are having children and enrolling them in childcare.

Who are Millennials?

Broadly speaking, Millennials are categorized as anyone born between 1981 and 1996. This means that in the year 2022, Millennials will be between 25-41 years old,

making them the prime demographic of those with children ages 0-5.

The Digital Generation

While not every Millennial is glued to a screen 24 hours a day the truth is that they have come of age alongside the internet at the end of the 20th century. They were either just children when they got the Internet for the first time, or have no experience of a life without the Internet whatsoever.

Whether for work or pleasure, much about modern life revolves around a screen of some sort. In fact, a study from Alcon¹ found that the average Canadian Millennial spends over 11 hours per day

looking at a screen, and according to WhistleOut², over 3 hours of this time is spent on a phone — that’s almost 9 years of a person’s life!

A few decades ago, ‘screen time’ would have referred to a passive experience, such as watching a TV show or movie. Now, screens provide both passive and active experiences. (See Table 1)

So just how active are Millennials on their screens? Consider this: the average American between the ages of 25-34 sends about 75 text messages per day!³

The Demand for Parents’ Time

Millennials get a bad wrap from older generations who dismiss them as entitled, but the facts paint a very different story. Millennial parents actually need to work extra hard to juggle all of the responsibilities of their personal lives.

Consider these realities of Millennial parenthood:

- 73% of Millennials work more than 40 hours a week, and nearly ¼ work more than 50 hours.
- 72% of American Millennial women are in the labor force in 2018 compared to 66% of Boomer women in 1985 and 40% of Silent Generation women in 1966.
- 59% of Millennials believe they are experiencing burnout — up from 53% before the pandemic.

Passive Screen Time	Active Screen Time
•Watching YouTube videos	•Sending text messages
•Watching movies	•Video calling
•Watching TV shows	•Working
•Playing repetitive games	•Playing action games

Table 1



¹<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/canadians-spend-11-hours-per-day-on-screens-alcon-survey-shows-811357674.html>
²<https://www.whistleout.com/CellPhones/Guides/5-ways-to-limit-screentime-at-bedtime#screentime>
³<https://www.textrequest.com/blog/how-many-texts-people-send-per-day/>
⁴https://www.manpowergroup.com/wps/wcm/connect/660ebf65-144c-489e-975c-9f838294c237/MillennialsPaper1_2020Vision_lo.pdf?MOD=AJPERES
⁵<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/02/14/millennial-life-how-young-adulthood-today-compares-with-prior-generations-2/>
⁶<https://www.indeed.com/lead/preventing-employee-burnout-report>



No Experience With the “Old Fashioned Way”

Childcare can be a very slow-moving field. When it comes to a child’s development, educators do not want to change what they do on a whim because there can be serious consequences for poor decision-making. This slow adoption of technology,

however, means that parents are encountering systems that they are not familiar with when compared to what they are accustomed to elsewhere in their lives.

For example, our study found that 31% of centers require parents to pay in-person with a check; however, 21% of millennials have never even written a check!⁷ Take a moment to think about it: This means that

in order to pay for their childcare, parents now have to:

1. Go to their bank.
2. Order a checkbook.
3. Wait for their checkbook to arrive.
4. Learn how to write a check.
5. Write out all of their upcoming payments.
6. Bring the checks into their center.

And this is all in a world where online banking and automatic payments are the norm. Aren’t childcare providers supposed to make working parents’ lives easier — not give them **more** work to do?

Let’s also not forget that parents enrolling their children are doing so during a pandemic, which is unlike the experiences of parents from even just a few years ago. The realities of pandemic parenthood can include:

- Choosing a childcare provider without a physical tour.
- Less face-to-face interaction during drop-off and pick-up.
- Interacting with a ‘runner’ or administrator rather than the educator.
- Less support from family and friends due to social distancing.



Stay Up To Date With The Latest in Childcare

Join us every Thursday for our free HiMama Helps webinars as we feature the leading voices in early childhood education. Plus, earn a certificate to help with your professional development.

[Click here](#) to see who we’re speaking with next!

⁷<https://blog.flexcutech.com/blog/do-millennials-pay-their-bills-the-case-for-mobile-and-internet-banking-integration>

CHAPTER THREE

Education

After being stuck at home during the pandemic, parents now have extra appreciation for all of the hard work that early childhood educators do each and every day. We’re also seeing this in the form of government support, such as the American Families Plan that is investing \$200 Billion into the space and the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan that is investing \$30 Billion with the goal of providing \$10/day childcare.



Want to Learn More About Canada’s Early Learning and Childcare Plan?

Hear our interview on The Preschool Podcast with Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development in Canada, where he shares more information about the vision for the Canada-wide Childcare Plan.

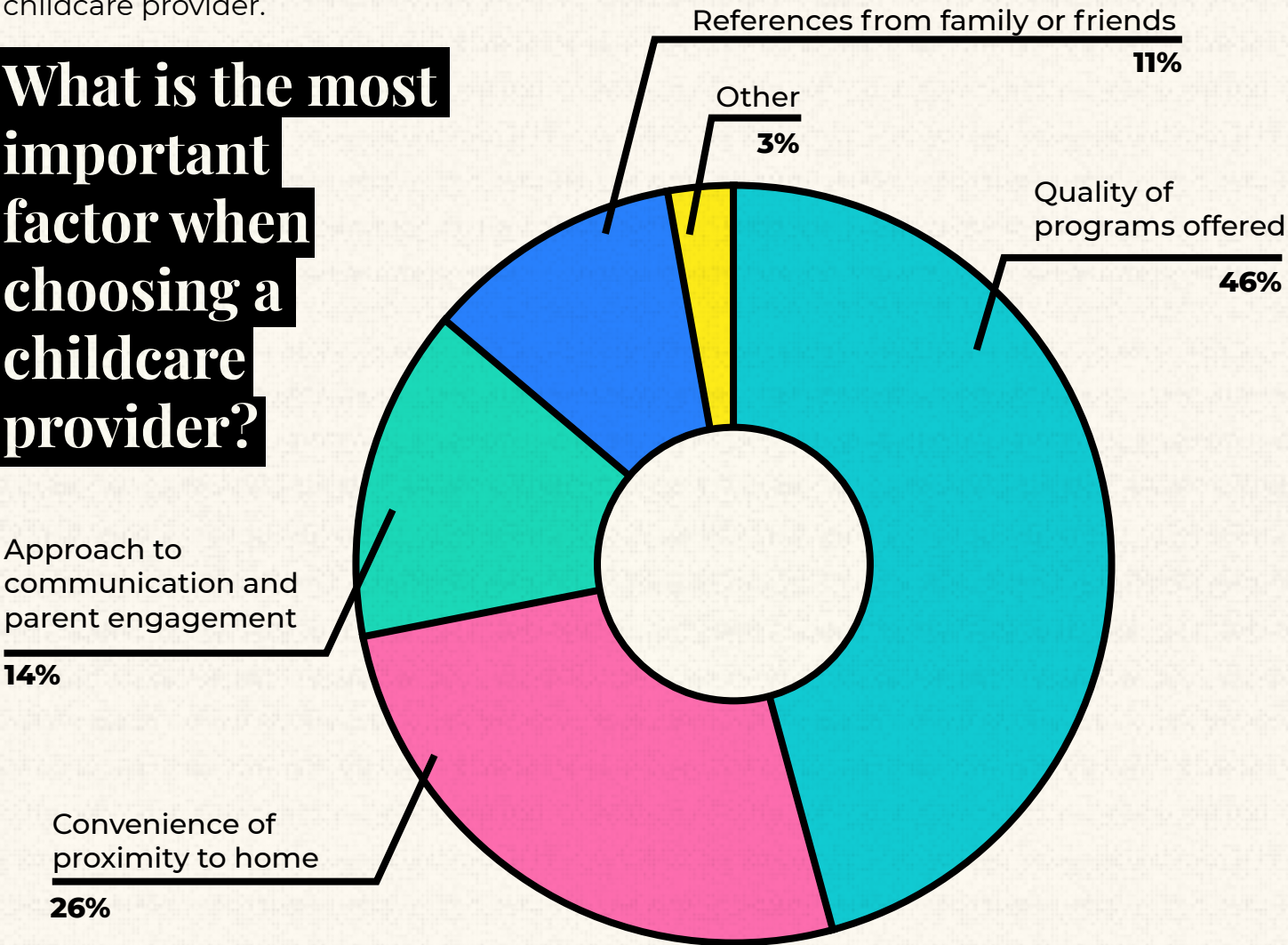
Check out the episode on the [HiMama Blog](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) or wherever you get your podcasts!

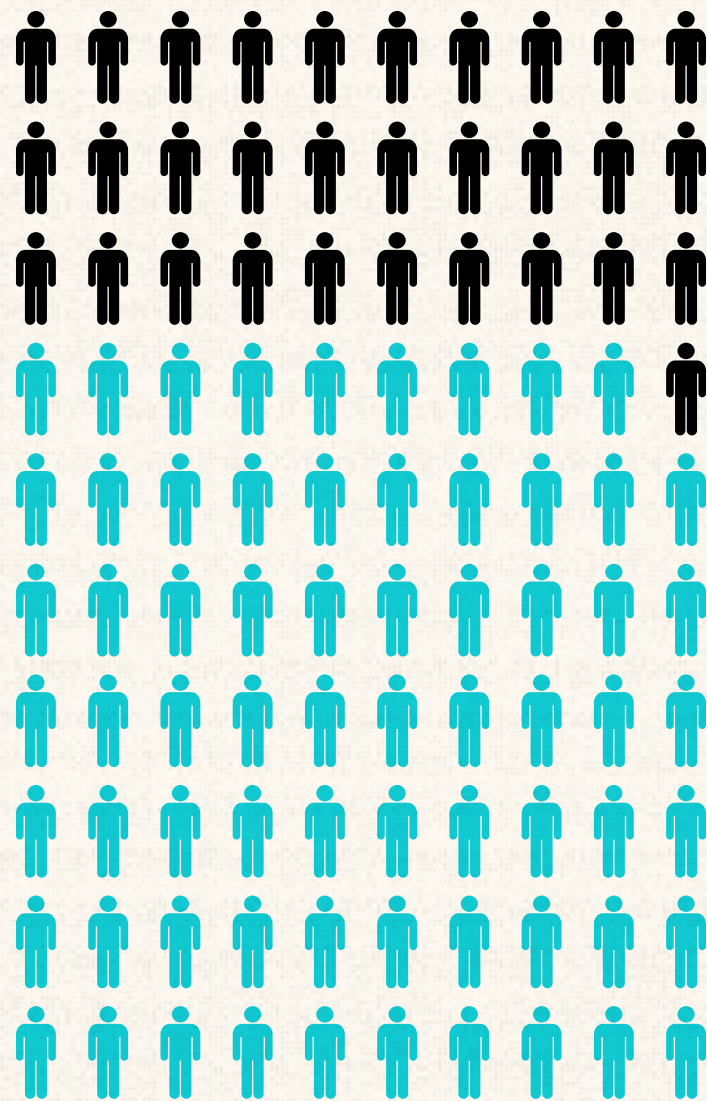


Quality of Learning Matters

Beyond this newfound recognition of the importance of the field, parents aren’t just looking for a safe place to send their children — learning is also top-of-mind. In fact, quality of education is the most important decision factor when selecting a childcare provider.

What is the most important factor when choosing a childcare provider?





69%

of parents would prefer to receive more frequent updates about their child's development progress.

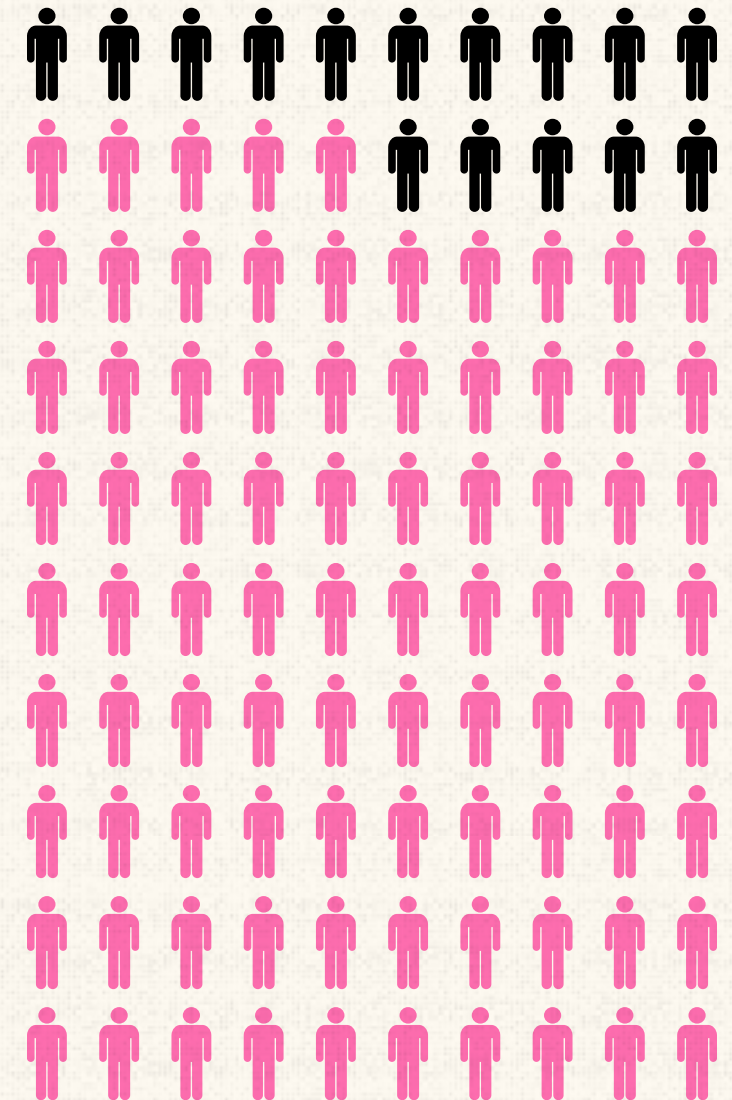
Even though quality of programming is the most important decision-making factor, providers are still not living up to parents' expectations. There is no such thing as over-communication when it comes to their child.

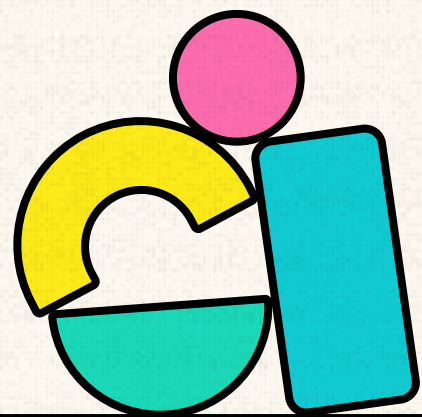


85%

of parents believe that communication from their center helps them understand how to support their child's developmental progress at home.

Parents are turning to their childcare providers to better understand how to best support their children at home. This is a great opportunity for educators to be indispensable thought leaders and partners in a child's development, decreasing the odds that parents will want to search for other providers.





CHAPTER FOUR

Communication

Thanks to smartphones, computers and the Internet, Millennial parents now have more ways to communicate with their work, families, friends and service providers than ever before. In such a connected society with apps available to do nearly anything you can think of, there really is no reason why childcare providers should not take advantage of this unique opportunity to form stronger connections with families.

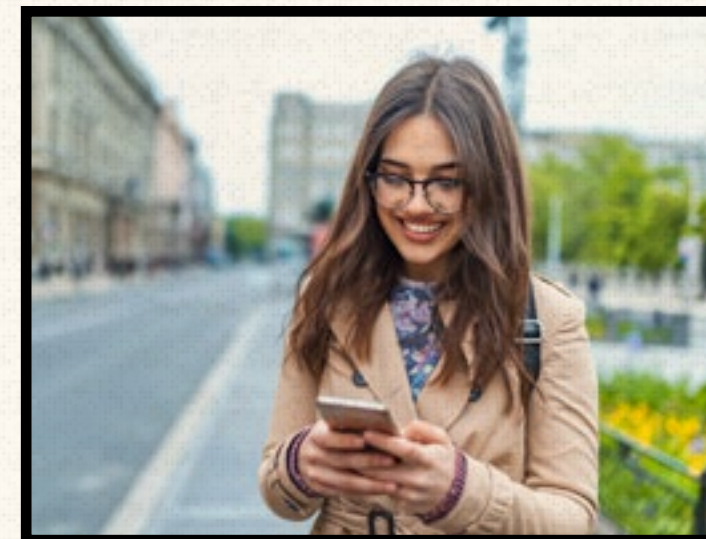


98% of parents consider communication and parent engagement to be important or very important when selecting a child care center.

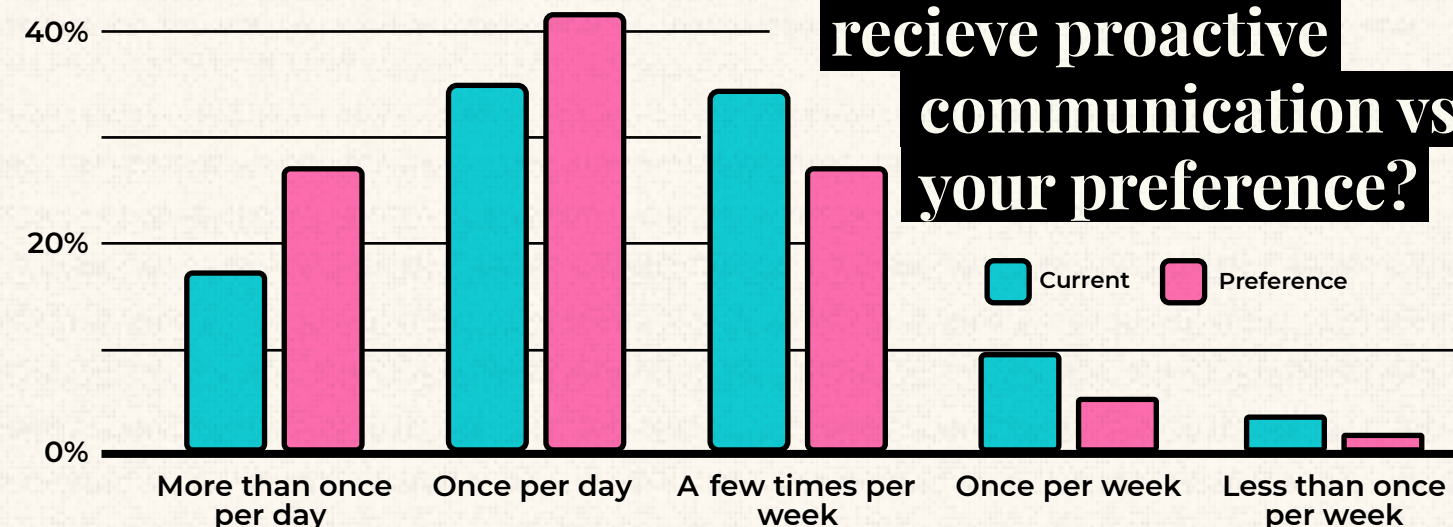
Today's parents want to know what is happening with their child throughout the day. Detailed information about how, what and how often educators communicate with families is something that nearly all parents have stated will play an important role in their decision-making.

77% of parents want more details about their child.

Whether they are messaged once a week or multiple times each day, over $\frac{3}{4}$ of all respondents want more information than they are currently receiving. It can be tempting to second-guess whether an update is necessary and worry that it will disturb parents, but this study has found the contrary: the more messages, the better!



How often do you receive proactive communication vs your preference?



Which of the following aspects of your child's daycare or preschool program do you feel could be improved?

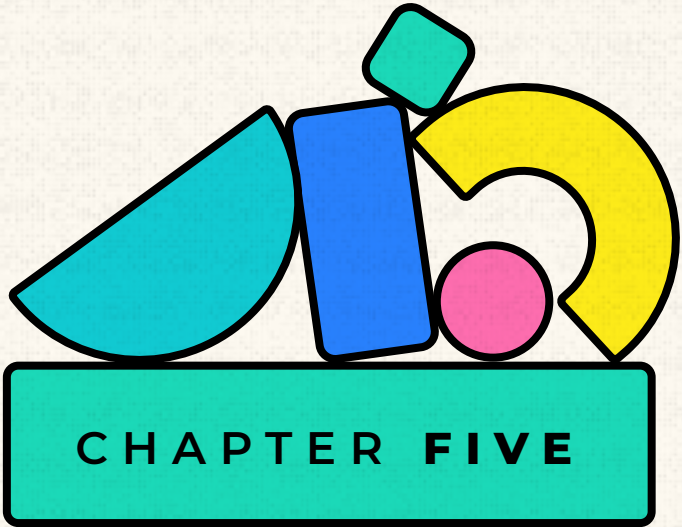
Communication about my child	29%
Billing and payment policies	20%
Quality of education	17%
Drop-off and pick-up policies	15%
Enrollment processes	14%

Simply talking in-person or online does not mean that communication is effective, however. Quality of communication needs to also be given careful thought and attention. When asked what the biggest area of improvement is, parents ranked communication as the #1 aspect of childcare that can be improved.

63% of all important communications happen between educators and parents.

Drop-off and pickup are typically the most crucial moments for a center to communicate with parents, so it's important that educators be well-equipped to handle whatever situations come up. Many centers have bridged the gap between these interactions with digital communication

throughout the day. For directors, this is a great opportunity to supervise these conversations and help educators with whatever issues are happening so that parents are getting what they need.



Technology

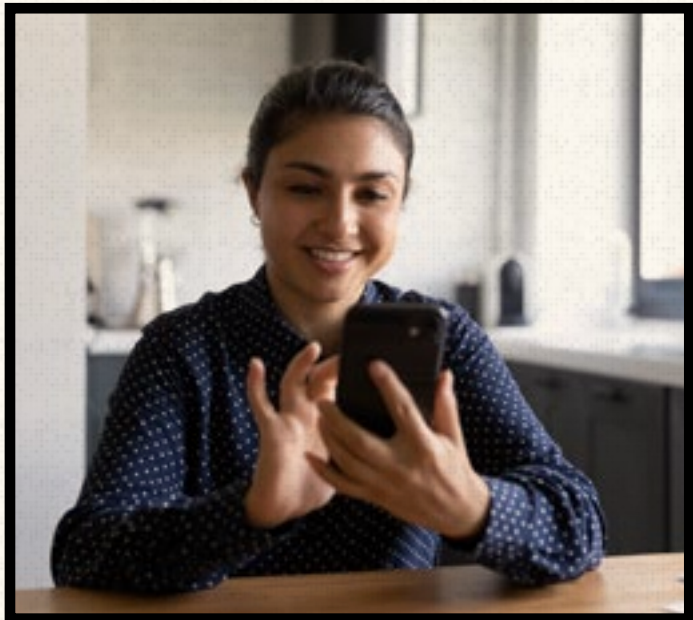
For parents in the social media era, digital updates aren't just a perk — they're the expectation.

Social media doesn't just mean posting on Facebook and Instagram; it's about using technology to connect with your community. And for Millennial parents, there's only one person they want to connect with during the day: the person who is looking after their child.

76% of providers still send home paper reports or daily sheets

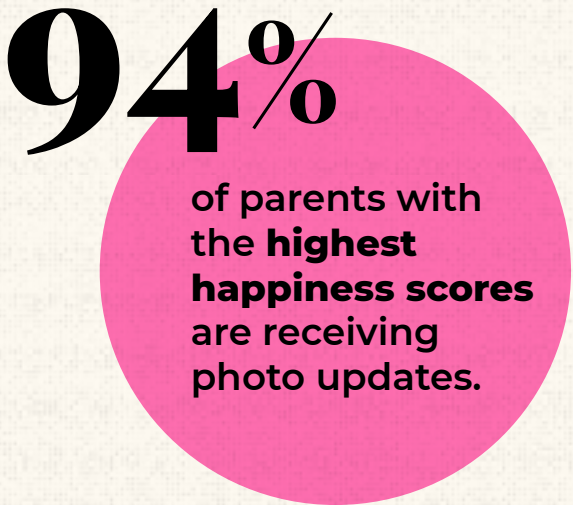
Childcare providers are lagging behind when it comes to technology. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of parents are learning what their child's day looked like through a hand-written

report. As most educators can attest to, handwritten paper reports can be very challenging to accurately update throughout the day and can often be left to filling out during quiet times long after the events actually occurred.



77% of parents wish they received more photo or video updates about their child.

As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. There is no such thing as too many pictures when it comes to your child — more photos = happier parents!

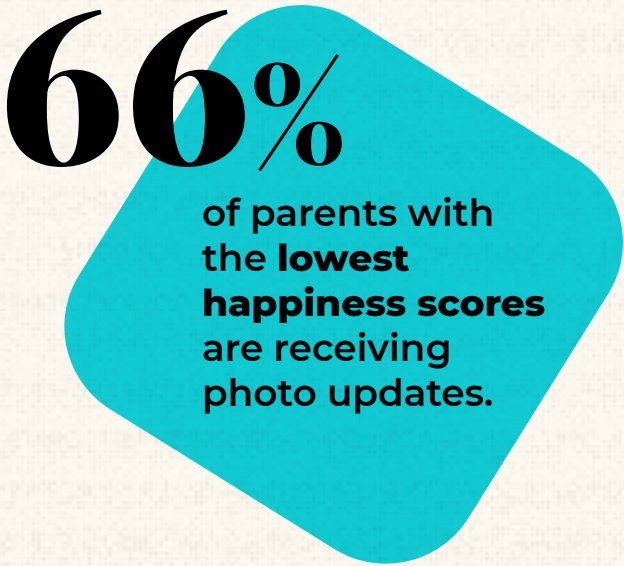


55% of centers use a childcare app.

In a time where there’s an app for nearly everything, almost half of providers offer no app for families to use. With so many centers still sending home paper reports or daily sheets, it is clear that these apps are not being used to their full potential.

Using a childcare app increases referrals.

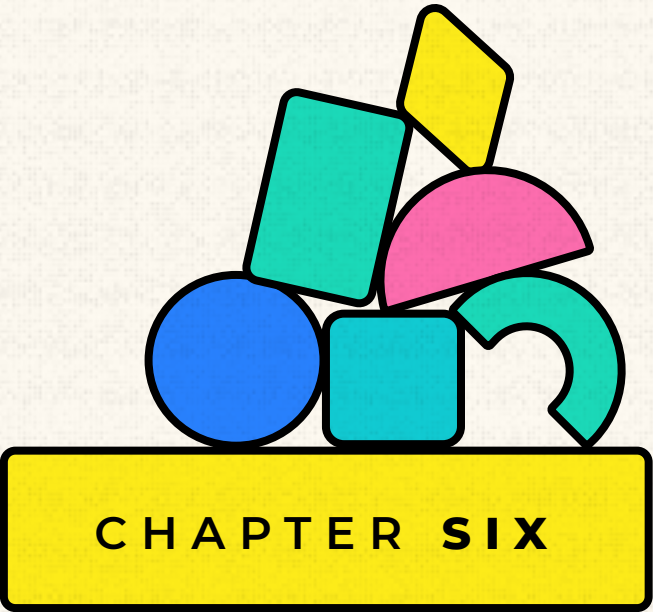
Parents were 29% more likely to provide a 9 or 10 rating when asked how likely they



would be to recommend their childcare provider if their child attended a center that uses a childcare app.

Childcare apps convey a higher level of quality.

Parents at centers that use a childcare app for communication were almost twice as likely to give both quality of care and customer service at their center a 5/5 rating, compared to parents at centers who don’t use an app.



Tuition Payments

Of course, one of the most important components of the parent-center relationship is payment, which providers need in order to stay open. When it comes to tuition, the first thought that comes to mind is typically enrollment fees; however, this survey found that the process of how to actually send invoices and collect payments is one of the biggest opportunities to stand out.

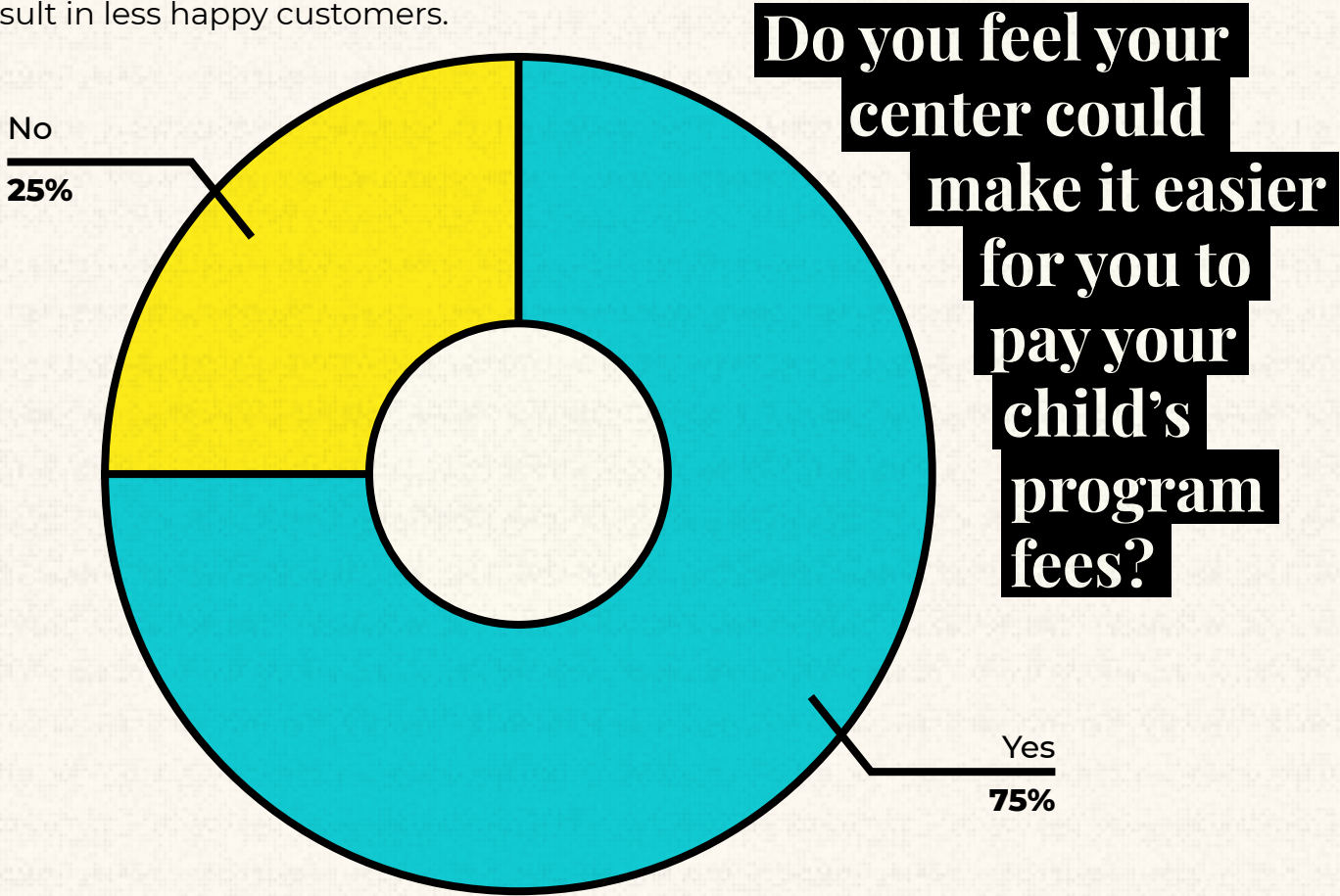
85% of parents pay at least some bills online.

Millennial parents prefer the convenience of managing finances using their smartphone or computer. And it’s not just one or two bills that are paid online — 60% of parents pay at least half of their bills digitally.

Benefits of Online Payments	
For Centers	For Parents
Invoice payment tracking Automatic invoice generation Less trips to the bank Less payment chasing	Collect reward points One-time setup Automatic recurring payments Flexibility of payment method

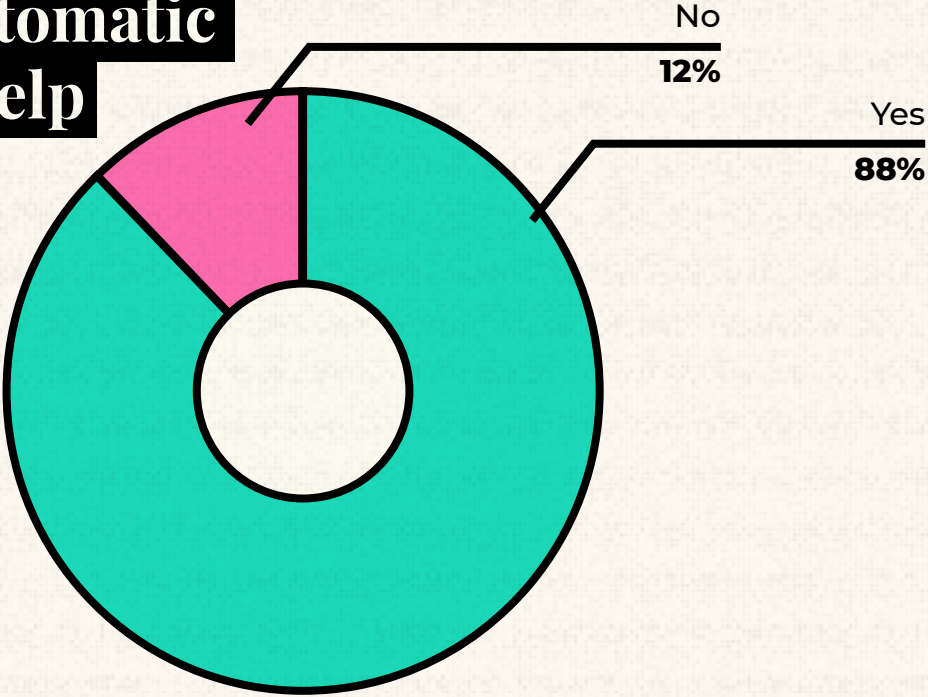
75% of parents think their childcare payment process could be made easier.

Many providers still require parents to pay via cash or check — and remember, almost one quarter of Millennials have never even written a check before!⁸ A troublesome payment process is a regular annoyance that will build up over time and result in less happy customers.



⁸<https://blog.flexcutech.com/blog/do-millennials-pay-their-bills-the-case-for-mobile-and-internet-banking-integration>

Do you use automatic payments to help you manage payments of recurring bills?



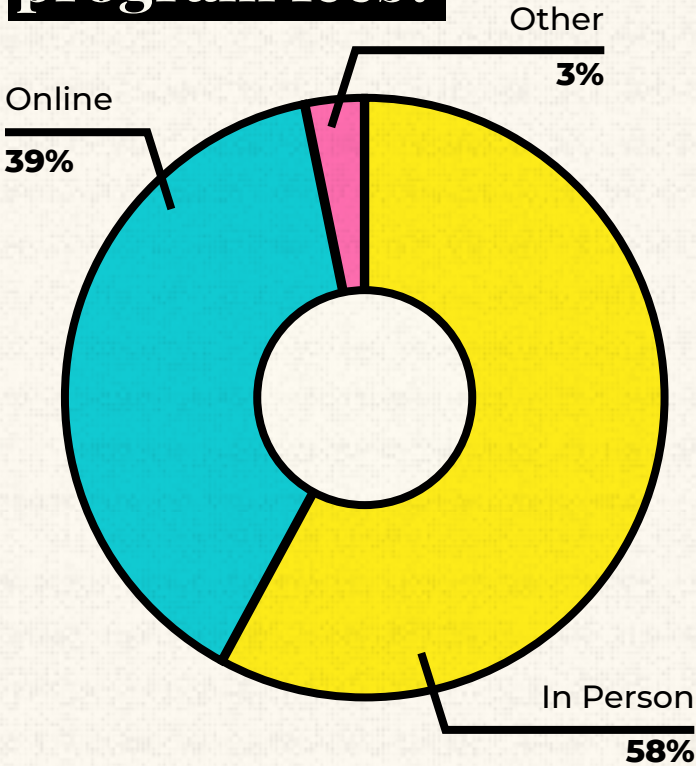
Automatic payment collection is easier for everyone.

Parents have enough on their plate already. Since you are regularly collecting payments, this process can be switched from manual to automatic and help make everyone's lives simpler. In fact, almost all of our respondents regularly use automatic payments for their other recurring bills.

Majority of childcare providers still prefer in-person payments.

Despite the familiarity and preference for online payments among Millennial parents, over half of centers still require parents to be physically present in order to pay their tuition fees.

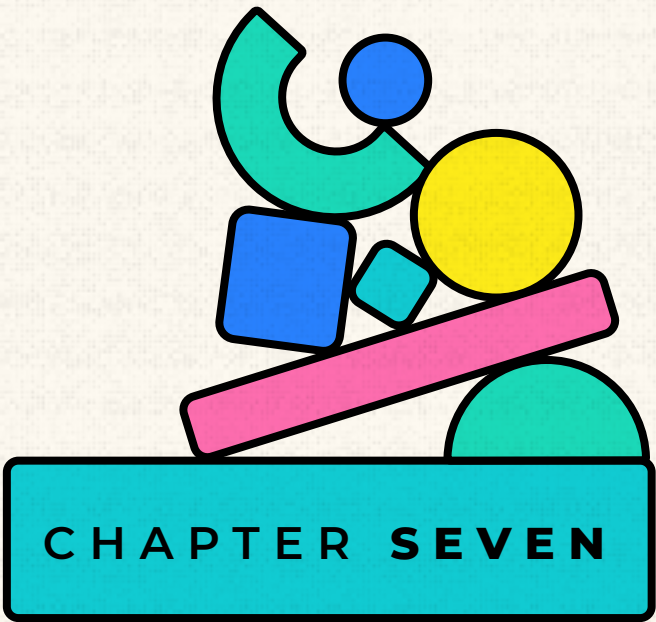
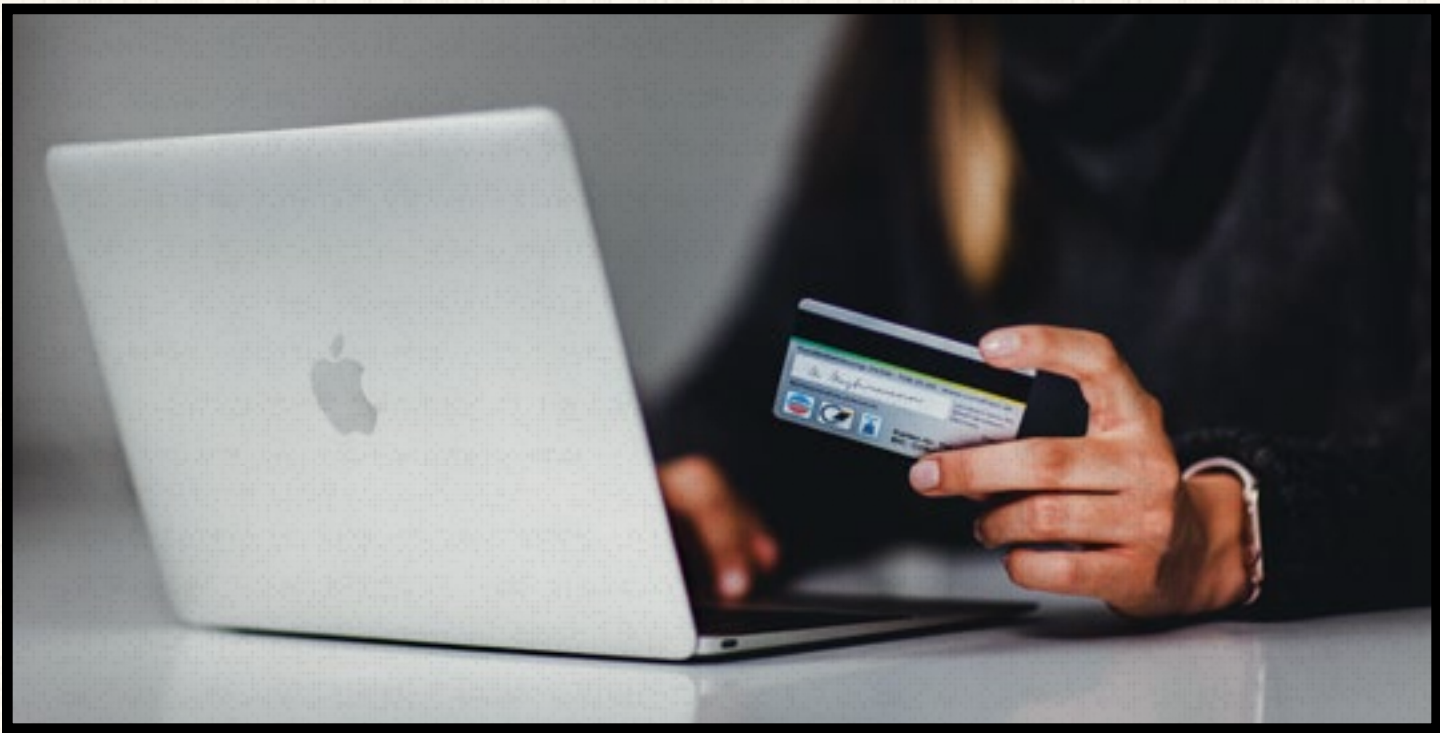
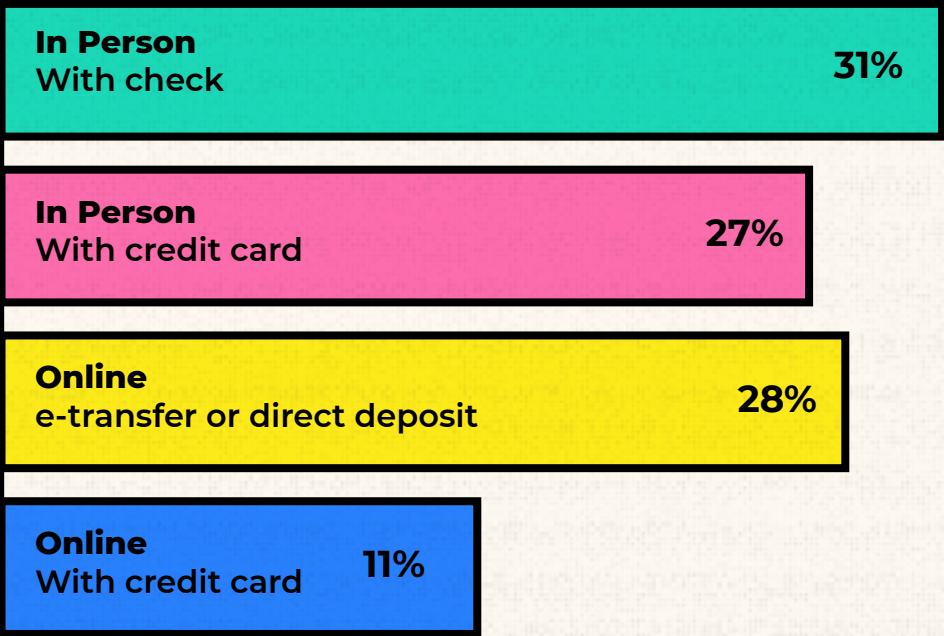
How do you currently pay for your child's program fees?



Families and providers are not aligned.

The gap between how centers collect payment vs. what parents prefer is clear. Only 11% of our respondents pay online with a credit card, despite this being one of the most familiar and preferred payment options for Millennials.

How do you currently pay for your child's program fees?



Conclusion

We hope that this report has helped you better understand the experience of Millennial parents when it comes to childcare. The world is a very different place than it was just a few years ago, but for childcare providers, that is an entirely new group of parents to consider the needs of.

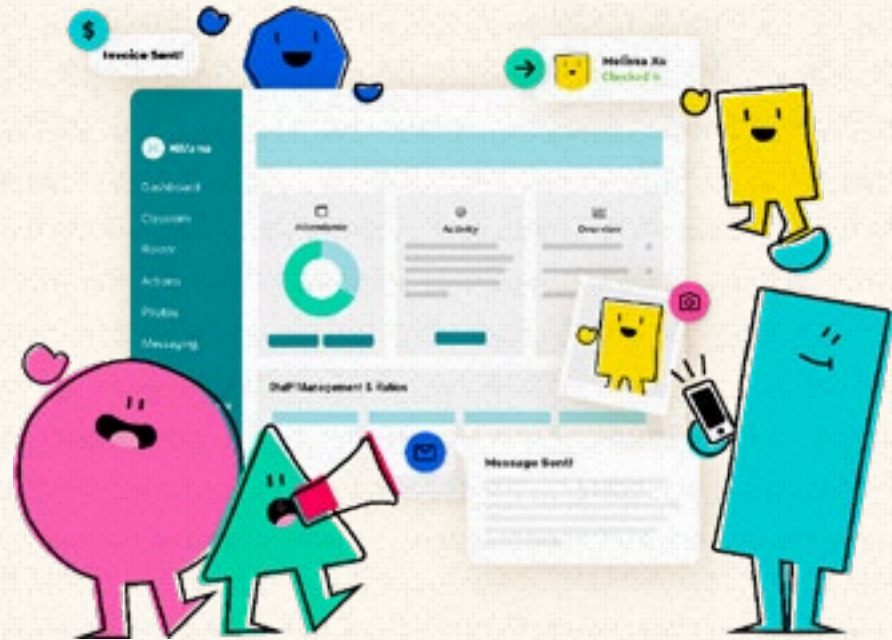
The results from our survey presented many expected as well as surprising insights. The key takeaways that we have identified to help your center meet the requirements that new parents have include:

- Do not rely on the way things have always been — the world is changing quickly.
- Host an engaging and comprehensive virtual tour if in-person is not an option.
- Provide a digital communication option to connect with parents.

- Empower educators to have informed conversations with parents.
- Send photo and video updates — the more the better!
- Educate parents about how your programming is benefiting their child's development.
- Involve parents in the process to continue the child's learning at home.
- Provide a digital tuition payment option.

Raising a child is an exhausting, rewarding and emotional experience, and childcare providers are at the front and center of this process. By better connecting with families, you will forge strong relationships that will keep parents happy and ultimately result in the best experience for children, which is what it is all really about at the end of the day. Thank you for reading this report and your continued hard work to provide your essential service!

About HiMama



HiMama is the only certified social enterprise child care app!
Our top-rated platform streamlines documentation, delights parents and amplifies the work of early childhood professionals.



Attendance & Health Tracking
Keep track of information that matters most.

Real-Time Parent Updates
Share updates directly to parents' email or phone.

Staff Management
Check and view teacher-to-student ratios in real time.

Billing & Payments
Receive payments without ever chasing parents again.

Developmental Assessments & Portfolios
Record and reflect on developments with online reports.

Daily Reports For Parents
Digital Daily Reports with meals, naps, activities and more.

Messaging Via Email, App & Text
Send mass emails and text messages to parents.

Program Planning
Plan learning with our classroom activity planner.

Calendars With Reminders
Keep parents informed on upcoming events and meals.

Comprehensive Training & Support
Unlimited phone and email support for staff & families.

Thanks for Reading!