



# CHILD CARE NEEDS IN DINWIDDIE COUNTY

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A SURVEY OF AREA  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FAMILIES  
DECEMBER 2009

DINWIDDIE SOCIAL SERVICES  
PO BOX 107  
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# CHILD CARE NEEDS IN DINWIDDIE COUNTY

A SURVEY OF AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FAMILIES-DECEMBER 2009

Having someone care for your child can be stressful. Even more so if you have not found a care giver or center that you are comfortable with. Child care goes by many names: day care, baby sitting, in-home care, and nursery/preschool programs. In Virginia, child care services are typically provided to families with children between the ages of birth to 12. Child care services can be provided in a home based setting by a relative or non-relative or in a center based setting. Child care programs are child-centered, family-focused services that support the family goals of economic self-sufficiency and child development by providing substitute parental care, protection, guidance, and early childhood education.

For many years, families have reported their concerns about quality child care to the staff of Dinwiddie Social Services. A needs assessment was completed in December 2009 in the hopes of clarifying these concerns and identifying the areas that need expanded availability of childcare services within Dinwiddie County. Thank you to the families that responded and to the staff of the five elementary schools for their assistance in this project.

To complete this needs assessment, a survey was developed and delivered home by way of elementary school children in Dinwiddie County. Two thousand one hundred eleven (2111) students were identified as enrolled in Sunnyside Elementary, Midway Elementary, Southside Elementary, Dinwiddie Elementary, and Sutherland Elementary. Nine hundred ninety one(991) responses (47%) were received from this effort. Of the responses received 14% were from Sunnyside families, 20% were from Midway families, 16% were from Southside families, 21% were from Dinwiddie families, and 29% of the responses were from Sutherland families.

Respondents identified 609 children in their household between the ages of newborn and five (5). There were 1286 children identified between the ages of six (6) and twelve (12).

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
Ages NB to 5	74	117	114	117	187
Ages 6-12	181	257	194	294	360

98 additional children were identified as children not included in the above totals that may also need child care services in the next twelve months. These children may be joining households due to birth, adoption, or changes in custody.

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
Ages NB to 5	6	13	10	6	15
Ages 6-12	11	2	19	7	9

CURRENT USE OF CHILDCARE:

Relatives seem to provide the majority of the child care services throughout the county (45%). 30% of the respondents identified no need for child care at this time. 17% of survey responses reported using a center-based child care provider while 16% use a home-based provider who is not a relative. Children in the Sunnyside area seem to have the least access to center based providers.

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
None	36	66	57	73	70
Relative	69	83	69	91	132
Center based program	5	49	26	20	71
Home based provider (non-relative)	27	27	19	43	42

SAFE AND SECURE CHILD CARE:

Families seem very concerned with finding safe and secure child care. 49% of those surveyed find it difficult to very difficult to find safe and secure child care for their children.

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
Very Easy	11	27	9	35	37
Easy	10	32	22	23	42
Neither Easy or Difficult	21	45	33	40	65
Difficult	50	50	52	55	75
Very Difficult	33	44	26	43	54

AVAILABILITY:

40% of families reported they are unsatisfied to very unsatisfied with the availability of child care in their area of the county. Sunnyside families, Dinwiddie families and Southside families identified the greatest concerns with availability. However, with only 25% of the total respondents providing a satisfactory response concerning availability of child care services throughout Dinwiddie County, this continues to be identified as a need for improvement.

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
Very Unsatisfied	33	39	16	38	45
Unsatisfied	45	33	53	43	53
Neither Satisfied or Unsatisfied	31	65	33	69	83
Satisfied	7	40	30	21	59
Very Satisfied	12	15	9	23	34

**CHILD CARE SERVICES NEEDED:**

Families overwhelmingly identified the need for Summer Programming (49%) as the number one type of child care they would like to see made available throughout the county. Before and After School programming (42%) was ranked second. Families identified the Champion Program provided in conjunction with the Prince George County School system and the YMCA provided in conjunction with the Petersburg School system as models for Dinwiddie to follow. All day child care was identified by 25% of the respondents with a particular need for infant care noted. A smaller portion of surveys cited the need for After School only child care (15%) or Before School only child care (6%).

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
All Day Care	38	45	44	37	81
Before School Only Care	9	13	10	9	23
After School Only care	16	32	21	30	51
Before and After School Care	49	98	70	66	130
Summer Programming	64	114	88	84	137

**CHOOSING CHILD CARE:**

Cost (72%) seems to be the most critical consideration when choosing child care services. Availability close to home (69%) seems preferential to choosing a provider close to work (49%) or to

the child's school (56%). Although the convenience of hours was identified by 62% as an important consideration, the availability of services on off-school days (holidays, teacher work days, etc) seems to be ranked as a greater concern by 66% of respondents.

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
Cost	85	164	114	115	233
Close to home	80	157	109	108	226
Close to work	60	121	74	78	157
Close to school	66	136	83	82	176
Convenience of hours	78	160	111	111	159
Off School days	73	156	107	106	213

#### HOURS OF OPERATION:

The majority of those surveyed identified the need for child care Monday- Friday between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (62%). However, 6 % of respondents identified a need for child care between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on those same days.

15% of respondents need weekend care from Friday through Monday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and 5% need weekend care from Friday through Monday between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Many families cited the need to work weekends and shift work schedules which may start before 6:00 a.m. and/or end after 6:00 p.m. Families also indicated they have had to find work outside the county adding travel time to their day and making it difficult to pick up their children by 6:00 p.m.

	Sunnyside Elementary	Midway Elementary	Southside Elementary	Dinwiddie Elementary	Sutherland Elementary
M-F 6 am- 6pm	74	144	100	103	198
F-M 6 am- 6pm	24	28	22	19	51
M-F 6pm- 6am	9	8	11	7	29
F-M 6pm- 6 am	10	3	13	6	22

#### SPECIAL NEEDS:

3% of respondents reported having a child that would need specialized services in order to be successful in child care. These specialized needs include working with children with asthma, ADHD, autism, speech delay, cerebral palsy, brain tumor, learning disability, developmental delay, seizures, sickle cell, hearing and visual impairments, and behavior problems. Many families identified tutoring and help with homework to be important services for their children.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

Dinwiddie Social Services has tried to determine the needs and interests for child care services within Dinwiddie County in order to enhance and hopefully work with providers to expand both home based and center based child care services throughout the county. The data show a need with over 1800 children of child care ages. A particular need was cited for newborn care and summer programming for school aged children. A request for school based before and after school programming has been made. Child care needs include care that is safe and secure with some flexibility in work hours to accommodate parents who work shift work or outside the county. A need for evening and weekend care was identified. Cost of services should be affordable to a broad range of households with services close to home.

The timing of this survey does not take into account the military families that are projected to move into our area beginning 2011. The need for 6% increases in child care services has been projected in order to meet the needs of these families. Hours of operation outside the standard Monday through Friday 6 am to 6 pm hours have been identified as a primary concern for military families who use purchased child care services.

It is our hope that this data will encourage providers to expand services to meet families' needs or venture to develop services to families in areas that are currently underserved.

## SURVEY COMMENTS:

- 1) Need 8a-7p
- 2) Childcare for over 12 is very difficult
- 3) 12 hour child care shifts would not be accommodated to account for travel time
- 4) Need child care until 6:30 pm for those of us who work in Richmond
- 5) Need summer care. I take my child to the Chester YMCA because they have activities to do instead of just sitting around the center and playing video games. At the Y they boat, fish and swim.
- 6) Not many child care choices.
- 7) We are lucky to be close to Greenhouse but the County itself doesn't have many day care centers to choose from.
- 8) No available Daycare center for the Dinwiddie Elementary School. We live about 4 miles from DES and my child has to go to Midway since she goes to Greenhouse.
- 9) Hard to find someone as good as you the parent.
- 10) I'm taking care of my grandson; this is an issue with me because I have other grandchildren that I help take care because of lack of daycare and the expense. We have empty buildings throughout the County which can be utilized for daycare.
- 11) There is very little available in the county for those that need this service. Most end up going to Petersburg for childcare services.
- 12) I only use family and friends to watch my kids. With my children's behavior problems, I have been through a lot of sitters so I just stay home.
- 13) Hours from 6-7pm would be excellent! If parents work in Richmond and get off at 5 pm, centers that close at 6pm is cutting it too close.
- 14) I currently work while kids are in school but I would like to work more.
- 15) If I have to be at work by 6 am until 6 pm, none of these hours will do. I need hours from 5 am to 7:30 pm.
- 16) I need hours until 9 pm.
- 17) I have to be at work by 6 am and get off at 6pm. I need services from 5 am until 7:30 pm or 8:00 pm.
- 18) Summer childcare programs really needed.
- 19) I love the Greenhouse but Dinwiddie needs infant care.
- 20) I am unable to afford child care. DSS waiting list extremely long.
- 21) Care should be provided by school like the Petersburg schools with YMCA providers and after school tutoring
- 22) I need weekend care because I have to work every other weekend.
- 23) pick up at 6:30 pm would be best
- 24) really need infant care.
- 25) Have not looked for child care in the past 5 years. Found ours via another teacher. Very satisfied with the Greenhouse.
- 26) With my husbands and my schedules we rarely need child care outside the home.
- 27) At first it was extremely hard to find safe, secure, trustworthy and honest childcare but we found it with Jackson Child Care.
- 28) No day care facility for DES with pick up/ drop off accommodations.
- 29) I 'm satisfied with the child care I've found but there isn't much of an availability or choice in child care.
- 30) Quality child care providers/ service is also an issue.
- 31) Why can't Dinwiddie mimic Prince George's Champion program.