

# Child Care Review Group Survey Executive Summary

## Published June 23, 2021

### Purpose

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The Child Care Review Group (CCRG) conducted a survey in May 2021 to assess the child care needs, values, and desires of Mount Holyoke College (MHC) faculty, staff, students, and the local community. The information collected with this survey was used to inform the report and recommendations the CCRG provided to President Stephens regarding the future of child care at MHC.

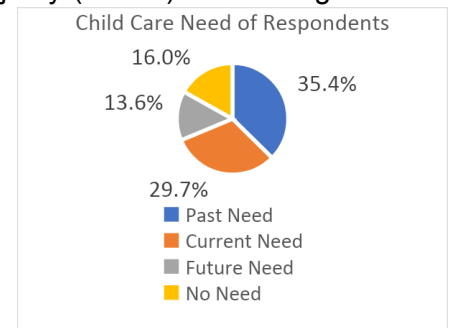
### Survey Method

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The survey included a series of both quantitative and qualitative questions regarding MHC community member child care values; opinions on the importance of various child care elements; past, current, and potential future use of the Gorse Children's Center; and elements of an ideal on-campus child care center. Data collection occurred over the span of two weeks, and was advertised through staff, faculty, and student newsletters, at staff and faculty meetings, through the Gorse Children's Center staff, and the MHC local community liaison.

### Participants

We obtained a sample of 669 participants. Of those, 21.5% were current faculty, 36.6% were staff, 7.9% were students, 15.9% were non-MHC affiliated people who had children currently enrolled at the Gorse Children's Center, and 17.3% were others who were not affiliated with MHC, nor had children enrolled at Gorse. A total of 74.3% were women, 19.3% were men, and 4.5% were nonbinary. The majority (82.7%) were categorized as non-Hispanic/Latinx white, and 14.2% as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). The average household income was \$128,915, ranging from \$2,400 to \$420,000, with the average number of people supported by the income equaling 2.9. The majority of respondents were a part of two-parent households (55.0%), with a further 24.7% from child-free households, 6.4% single parents, 3.3% people who are co-parenting, and 3.1% from multigenerational households. Many people reported having children who were grown adults, or were grandparents involved in child care. Most respondents (60.8%) lived within 10 miles of campus. Reported child care needs can be viewed in the figure.



### Findings

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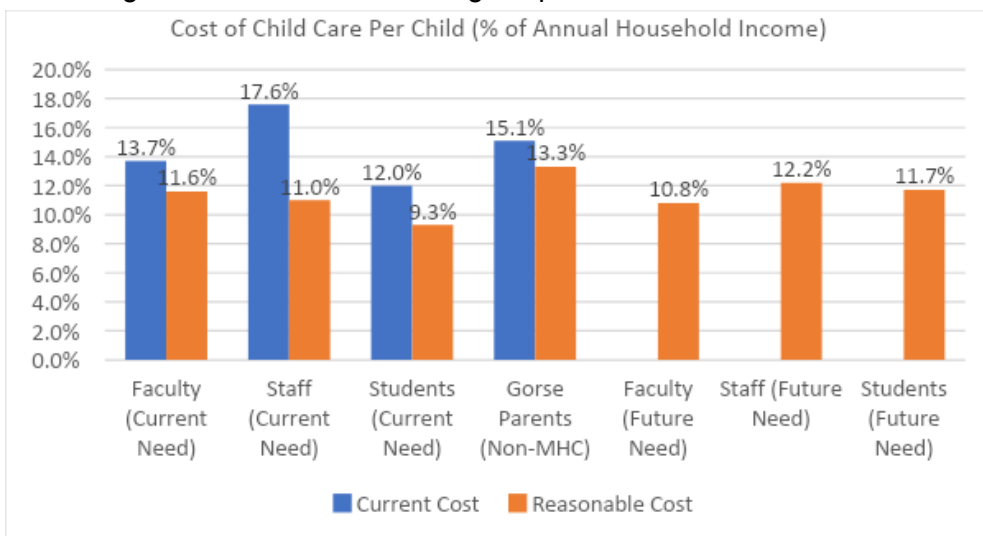
#### MHC Faculty, Staff and Student Child Care Values

We asked MHC community members to rate on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) how much they agreed with statements related to child care. The statements with the strongest agreement (average response ( $M$ )  $\geq 4$ ) were: 1) Mount Holyoke should have an on-campus child care facility ( $M = 4.37$ ); 2) Availability of on-campus child care is an important aspect of MHC's identity, as it aligns with our community goals of providing equal access in employment and education ( $M = 4.23$ ); 3) Having a child care center associated with academic departments provides opportunities for students in experiential learning and to explore career options ( $M = 4.07$ ); 4) On-campus child care should prioritize needs of MHC faculty, staff and students over others ( $M = 4.02$ ). Statements with the least agreement were those indicating that on-campus child care was more important or less important than other benefits ( $M = 2.52$  in both cases), suggesting that on-campus child care is seen as comparable to other benefits offered by the College.

We identified differences across race/ethnicity, gender, and faculty/staff status, which can be viewed in Table 1 at the end of this document. Further analyses indicated that assistant professors reported the highest agreement that on-campus care was important to their recruitment ( $M = 4.21$ ) and retention ( $M = 3.76$ ) at the College. Students reported that on-campus care was important for the MHC curriculum, as well as for providing opportunities for student experiential learning and research.

### Cost of Child Care

Cost of child care can be viewed in the figure. Based on the average reported household income, and an average rate of 11.7% for “reasonable” cost across people with current and future child care needs, this would result in an annual average cost of \$19,273, or \$1606/month (for 12 months of care). As this is the average, it is a cost that would not be affordable for many of the respondents. Further, only a third of participants reported their annual household income.



### Gorse Scholarship

Among respondents who had past child care needs and used the Gorse Children’s Center, less than 10% were eligible for the Gorse scholarship, and 53% were unaware of the scholarship. Among those MHC faculty and staff currently using Gorse, 11% are eligible for the scholarship, and 33% were not aware of it.

### Importance of Child Care Services

For MHC staff, faculty, and student respondents with past, current, or future child care needs, affordability, range of services, and curriculum and educational philosophy were consistently rated as important. There were some differences across time frame of child care need, as well as across race/ethnicity and gender, which can be viewed in Table 2 at the end of this document. MHC respondents with anticipated child care needs almost exclusively rated an on-campus child care center as their first or second choice of child care. The other options were an off-campus child care center, home-based daycare, private child care (such as a nanny), or child care provided by a family member. Among the broader community (i.e., non-MHC affiliated), those with current child care needs rated the following (in order) as most important ( $M \geq 4$ ): range of services, curriculum and educational philosophy, the facility accreditation beyond state requirements, and affordability. The least important item was compatibility with the MHC calendar ( $M = 2.15$ ). For the broader community with future child care needs, the most important elements, in order, were: curriculum and educational philosophy, range of services, and affordability. Compatibility with the MHC calendar was again rated as least important ( $M = 2.49$ ).

### Use of Gorse Children’s Center

For the participants who did/do/will use Gorse, most of the assessed elements were reported to be important in their (future) decision to use Gorse. The reasons that were rated most important were (in order): location, availability of enrollment slots, the teachers, days/hours of operation, and the range of services. Participants could provide qualitative responses for what they valued about Gorse. The most frequently described reason was the close location ( $N = 21$ ), which participants wrote enabled them to nurse infants, better enabled them to do their jobs, and in general provided needed flexibility. Other reasons participants wrote in were the flexibility in days/hours, and range of care ( $N = 7$ ), compatibility with the MHC calendar ( $N = 6$ ), and the qualities of the teachers ( $N = 4$ ), among others. Some participants who selected Gorse for child care also expressed challenges or dissatisfaction with elements of the center. The most frequently cited was that the cost was too high ( $N = 6$ ), a lack of diversity, particularly among staff ( $N = 3$ ), and issues with the scholarship, such as there not being a scholarship for part-time care ( $N = 3$ ).

Similar to the MHC community, the broader community rated most of the provided reasons as important for choosing Gorse. The items that were rated as most important ( $M \geq 4$ ), in order, are: the teachers, availability of slots, range of services, curriculum, days/hours of operation, location, national accreditation, and management.

### **Reasons to Not Use Gorse**

Among MHC community members who had not used Gorse and did not plan to in the future, 29.2% indicated it was due to the price being unaffordable for their family, and 15.8% indicated the location was the issue. A further 40.8% stated they were not affiliated with MHC at the time they needed child care. Some MHC community members with past and current child care needs also reported that the curriculum was why they did not select Gorse.

A total of 30.8% of people who have not used Gorse stated that a decrease in price would make it more likely for them to choose Gorse in the future, while 14.2% indicated that a shift in days/hours of operation, and 8.3% reported availability of slots would increase the chance they would choose Gorse in the future. Only 6.7% stated nothing would make them more likely to enroll in Gorse.

### **The Future of On-Campus Child Care**

Participants reported a range of desires for what an ideal on-campus child care center would look like at MHC. The themes identified across responses related to ability to provide care for children with disabilities, affordability, connection to academic department(s), creating community, curriculum and activities, diversity, equity, non-corporate model, one of a series of benefits for employees, prioritization of MHC students and employees, schedule, services, similarity to Gorse, stability/college commitment, structure and governance, and teachers and staff. A table of the frequency in which each theme and subtheme are mentioned can be found at the end of this document in Table 3.

### **Conclusions**

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The primary findings that emerged in our analysis are: 1) There is strong support for continued on-campus child care, including infant care; 2) Cost is a major barrier to utilizing current on-campus child care, and there is a robust request for future on-campus options to be affordable for the MHC community; 3) Child care is valued on-par with other employee benefits (i.e., not as more or less important than other benefits); 4) There are some differences across race and gender regarding on-campus child care priorities, as well as between faculty/staff designation.

| Table 1. MHC Community Child Care Values   |                          |      |                |             |                 |             |              |             |                 |      |                    |             |                      |             |                 |             |
|--|--------------------------|------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|  |                          |      |                |             |                 |             |              |             |                 |      |                    |             |                      |             |                 |             |
|  | Race & Ethnicity         |      |                |             |                 |             | Gender       |             |                 |      |                    |             | Faculty/Staff Status |             |                 |             |
|  | Overall Sample (N = 417) |      | BIPOC (N = 75) |             | White (N = 330) |             | Men (N = 80) |             | Women (N = 302) |      | Nonbinary (N = 25) |             | Faculty (N = 135)    |             | Staff (N = 221) |             |
|  | M                        | SD   | M              | SD          | M               | SD          | M            | SD          | M               | SD   | M                  | SD          | M                    | SD          | M               | SD          |
| Mount Holyoke should have an on-campus child care facility.  | 4.37                     | 1.00 | 4.52           | 1.00        | 4.37            | 0.98        | 4.29         | 0.96        | 4.39            | 1.01 | 4.68               | 0.75        | 4.67                 | 0.81        | 4.06            | 1.10        |
| An on-campus child care facility should prioritize the needs of Mount Holyoke students, staff and faculty over those of the surrounding towns.   | 4.02                     | 1.00 | 4.00           | 1.16        | 4.04            | 0.94        | 3.80         | 1.01        | 4.07            | 0.99 | 4.24               | 0.78        | 4.03                 | 1.03        | 4.02            | 0.99        |
| An on-campus child care facility should be cheaper for Mount Holyoke students and employees than for other local residents, in other words, MHC community members should pay a subsidized/reduced rate.  | 3.80                     | 1.17 | 3.88           | 1.20        | 3.80            | 1.15        | <b>3.30</b>  | <b>1.99</b> | 3.93            | 1.11 | 4.12               | 1.01        | 3.54                 | 1.18        | <b>3.85</b>     | <b>1.17</b> |
| An on-campus child care facility should be priced according to a family's resources regardless of whether they are a part of the Mount Holyoke community.  | 3.62                     | 1.19 | 3.81           | 1.23        | 3.58            | 1.16        | 3.46         | 1.25        | 3.63            | 1.15 | <b>4.24</b>        | <b>1.05</b> | 3.55                 | 1.19        | 3.56            | 1.21        |
| Mount Holyoke College should offer income based, financial assistance for child care that families can use toward their preferred child care arrangements.   | 3.77                     | 1.19 | <b>4.11</b>    | <b>1.11</b> | 3.69            | 1.21        | 3.69         | 1.09        | 3.74            | 1.22 | 4.64               | 0.76        | <b>3.79</b>          | <b>1.13</b> | 3.66            | 1.24        |
| Having an on-campus child care facility was important in my recruitment to the College.  | 3.06                     | 1.58 | <b>3.60</b>    | <b>1.56</b> | 2.94            | 1.56        | 2.86         | 1.54        | 3.12            | 1.59 | 3.09               | 1.60        | <b>3.60</b>          | <b>1.52</b> | 2.50            | 1.47        |
| Having an on-campus child care facility is important to my decision to stay at the College.  | 2.85                     | 1.48 | <b>3.25</b>    | <b>1.39</b> | 2.76            | 1.49        | 2.67         | 1.36        | 2.90            | 1.51 | 3.10               | 1.65        | <b>3.27</b>          | <b>1.44</b> | 2.34            | 1.35        |
| Having an on-campus child care center fulfills my professional needs better than a different childcare arrangement.  | 3.41                     | 1.51 | <b>3.80</b>    | <b>1.44</b> | 3.32            | 1.51        | 3.25         | 1.48        | 3.48            | 1.50 | 3.00               | 1.73        | <b>3.87</b>          | <b>1.44</b> | 2.93            | 1.50        |
| I view the availability of on-campus child care as an important aspect of Mount Holyoke's identity as a gender diverse women's liberal arts college that is committed to providing equal access in employment and education to all employees and students. | 4.23                     | 1.17 | <b>4.60</b>    | <b>0.92</b> | 4.18            | 1.19        | 4.06         | 1.28        | 4.27            | 1.14 | 4.60               | 0.87        | <b>4.62</b>          | <b>0.84</b> | 3.84            | 1.31        |
| As a parent, it is desirable to use a child care center that is affiliated with an academic department or program.   | 3.26                     | 1.26 | <b>3.58</b>    | <b>1.43</b> | 3.21            | 1.18        | 3.09         | 1.14        | 3.34            | 1.12 | 3.18               | 1.40        | 3.35                 | 1.28        | 3.10            | 1.23        |
| Providing on-campus child care is more important than other benefits provided by MHC.  | 2.52                     | 1.07 | <b>2.81</b>    | <b>1.09</b> | 2.46            | 1.05        | 2.48         | 1.13        | 2.53            | 1.04 | 2.64               | 1.22        | <b>2.77</b>          | <b>1.01</b> | 2.15            | 0.96        |
| Providing on-campus child care is as important as other benefits provided by MHC.  | 3.62                     | 1.27 | <b>4.09</b>    | <b>1.18</b> | 3.53            | 1.26        | 3.37         | 1.30        | 3.68            | 1.25 | 3.63               | 1.26        | <b>3.99</b>          | <b>1.06</b> | 3.21            | 1.34        |
| Providing on-campus child care is less important than other benefits provided by MHC.  | 2.52                     | 1.18 | 2.09           | 1.12        | <b>2.61</b>     | <b>1.17</b> | 2.73         | 1.25        | 2.49            | 1.17 | <b>2.08*</b>       | <b>0.91</b> | 2.12                 | 1.06        | <b>2.89</b>     | <b>1.20</b> |
| Having an on-campus child care facility associated with the College's academic departments supports faculty in creating strong and dynamic curriculum for human development and education programs.  | 3.67                     | 1.04 | <b>4.00</b>    | <b>0.93</b> | 3.73            | 1.04        | 3.53         | 0.94        | 3.81            | 1.03 | 4.04               | 1.24        | 3.60                 | 1.01        | 3.64            | 1.03        |
| Having an on-campus child care facility associated with the College's academic departments provides opportunities for students to take part in experiential learning and to explore career options.  | 4.07                     | 0.86 | 4.13           | 0.81        | 4.07            | 0.86        | 3.90         | 0.74        | 4.10            | 0.88 | 4.32               | 0.95        | 3.89                 | 0.83        | 4.02            | 0.87        |
| Having an on-campus child care facility associated with the College's academic departments provides a valuable and accessible opportunity to do research both for faculty and students.  | 3.96                     | 0.92 | 4.01           | 0.92        | 3.96            | 0.91        | 3.83         | 0.77        | 3.99            | 0.95 | 4.12               | 1.05        | 3.78                 | 0.89        | 3.90            | 0.94        |

NOTE: Bolded numbers are significantly different at  $p < 0.05$ ; \*nonbinary participants are only significantly different for men for this item

| Item   | Past Child Care Need (N = 223) |             | Current Child Care Need (N = 79) |             | Future Child Care Need ( = 65) |             |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
|  | M                              | SD          | M                                | SD          | M                              | SD          |
| Affordability  | 4.39                           | 0.77        | 4.47                             | 0.71        | 4.54                           | 0.5         |
| Range of child care services (infant care, after school care, drop in care, care during summer, care during school vacation) | 4.27                           | 1           | 4.52                             | 0.72        | 4.4                            | 0.55        |
| Cooperation with early intervention specialists  | 3.4                            | 1.12        | 3.59                             | 1.12        | 3.86                           | 0.85        |
| Opens before 8am   | 3.33                           | 1.2         | 3.33                             | 1.1         | <b>3.45</b>                    | <b>0.93</b> |
| Open past 5pm  | 3.63                           | 1.22        | 3.59                             | 1.11        | 3.69                           | 0.83        |
| Flexibility with days/hours of attendance and availability of part time options  | 4.09                           | 0.9         | 3.99                             | 1.03        | 4.16                           | 0.7         |
| Compatibility with MHC academic calendar   | <b>3.71</b>                    | <b>1.16</b> | <b>3.95</b>                      | <b>1.22</b> | <b>3.92</b>                    | <b>0.97</b> |
| Diversity of staff and students  | <b>3.8</b>                     | <b>1.08</b> | 4.16**                           | 0.96        | 4.41                           | 0.79        |
| Facility is accredited beyond the basic state requirement (NAEYC or similar)   | 3.64                           | 0.98        | <b>3.72</b>                      | <b>0.99</b> | 3.82                           | 0.95        |
| Curriculum/Educational Philosophy  | <b>4.19</b>                    | <b>0.88</b> | 4.18*                            | 0.84        | 4.27                           | 0.7         |
| On-campus Location   | 3.68                           | 1.25        | 4.07                             | 1.14        | 4.22*                          | 0.77        |

NOTE: Bolded items are where BIPOC participants rated the items as more important than white participants. \*Women rated these items as more important than men. \*\*Nonbinary people rated this item as more important than men.

**Table 3. Frequency of Themes for Future Child Care Desires**

| Theme  | Subtheme   | Frequency |
|--|--|-----------|
| Ability to provide care for children with disabilities |  | 3         |
| Affordable   |  | 85        |
|  | Accepts vouchers                                       | 3         |
|  | Affordable for MHC employees                           | 13        |
|  | Endowed  | 1         |
|  | Flexibility in scheduling to help with cost            | 1         |
|  | Flexibility in tuition                                 | 21        |
|  | To foster diversity of families                        | 2         |
|  | Subsidized by the college                              | 6         |
| Connected to academic department                       |  | 15        |
| Creating community                                     |  | 7         |
| Curriculum and activities                              |  | 53        |
|  | Connect to MHC students and resources                  | 7         |
|  | Emphasis on outdoor time                               | 14        |
|  | Emphasis on play                                       | 3         |
|  | Emphasis on social/emotional learning                  | 3         |
|  | Emphasis on social justice                             | 2         |
|  | Self-directed learning philosophy                      | 2         |
|  | Supports values of the college                         | 4         |
| Day to day processes                                   |  | 5         |
| Diversity of Families, Students                        |  | 26        |
| Equitable  |  | 3         |
| Justifiable cost to college                            |  | 1         |
| Not corporate or for profit                            |  | 4         |
| One of a series of benefits to employees               |  | 7         |
| Prioritizes MHC affiliates                             |  | 13        |
| Schedule   |  | 63        |
|  | Compatibility with MHC calendar and employee schedules | 15        |
|  | Extended hours   | 13        |
|  | Flexibility in days or hours                           | 35        |
| Services   |  | 42        |
|  | After school program & summer extended ages            | 12        |
|  | Drop in more flexible                                  | 3         |
|  | Flexibility in services                                | 9         |
|  | Range in ages  | 18        |
| Similar to Gorse                                       |  | 15        |
| Stability, college commitment                          |  | 4         |
| Structure and governance models                        |  | 6         |
| Teachers and Staff                                     |  | 92        |
|  | Consistency in teachers                                | 5         |
|  | Diversity  | 30        |
|  | Small student:teacher ratio                            | 7         |
|  | Happy  | 2         |
|  | Loving, caring   | 15        |
|  | Retain current teachers and staff                      | 3         |
|  | Well paid  | 5         |
|  | Well trained, high quality                             | 25        |