

Parents' Perception of Child Care Quality:

Results from a Maryland Survey of TANF Applicants with Young Children

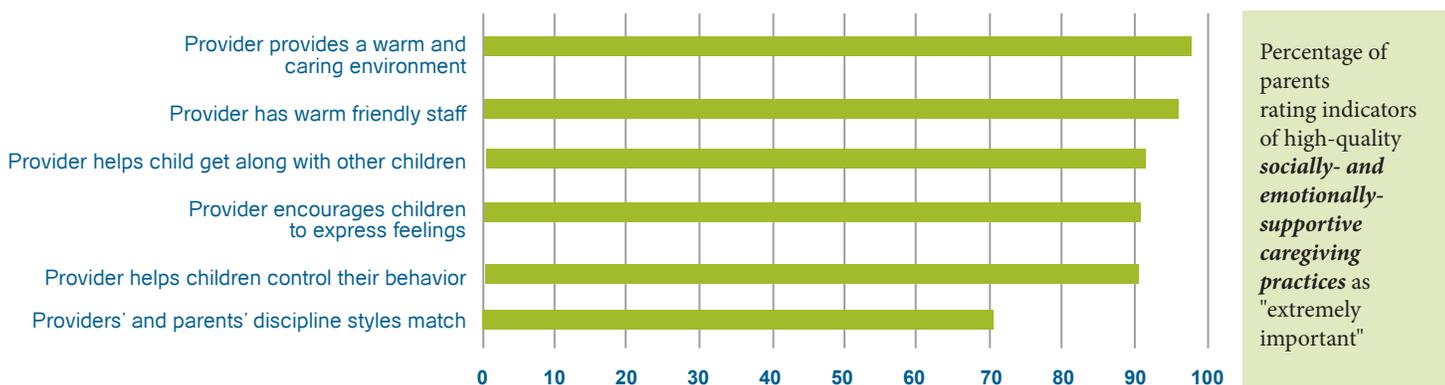
Jennifer Cleveland, Amy Susman-Stillman, Tamara Halle, and Amy Blasberg

In a survey of 289 Maryland families with young children (ages 0-6) who recently applied for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, parents were asked their views on what is important to the overall quality of a child care arrangement. Researchers focused on *four aspects of child care quality*:

- 1) strategies to support children's social and emotional development,
- 2) strategies to implement developmentally appropriate instructional practices,
- 3) family-sensitive caregiving practices, and
- 4) cultural responsiveness.

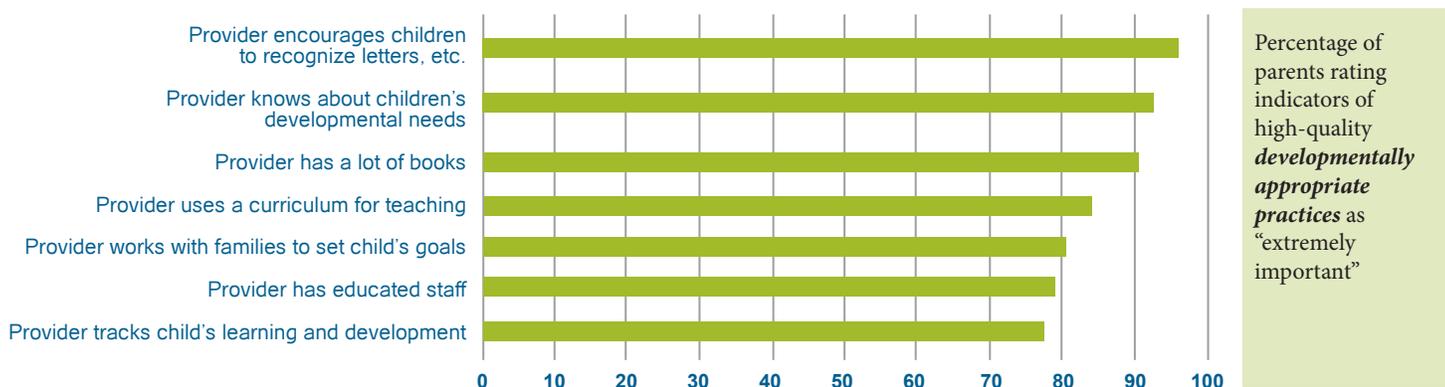
Strategies to support children's social and emotional development

Parents consistently rated socially- and emotionally-supportive caregiving practices and developmentally appropriate practices as being extremely important.



Strategies to implement developmentally appropriate instructional practices

Parents of toddler and preschool-aged children were more likely than parents of an infant to rate a provider who helps children learn to control their behavior as "extremely important."

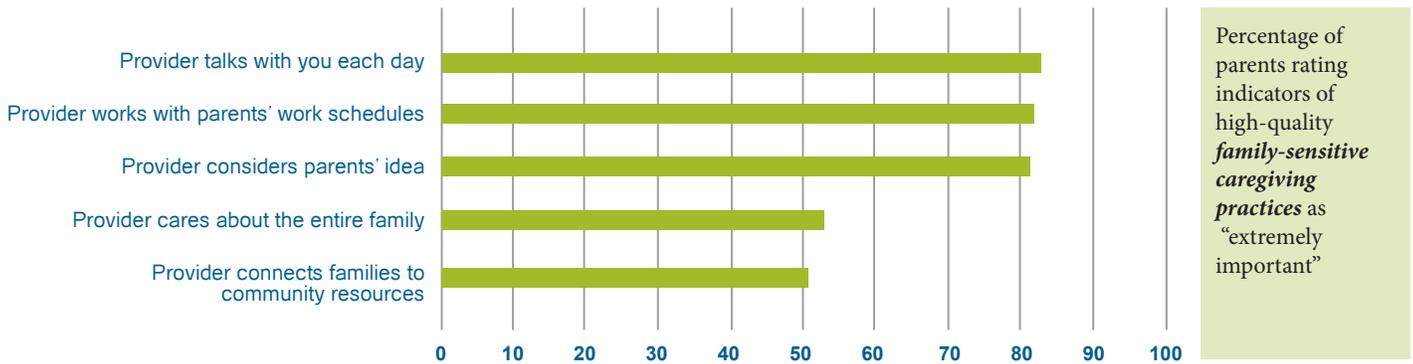


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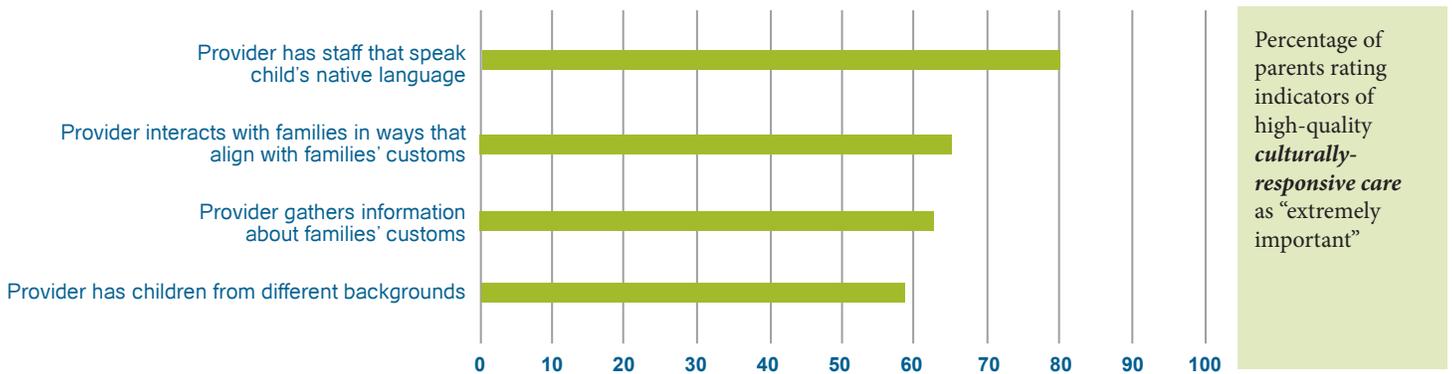
Family-sensitive caregiving practices

Parents who use center-based care were more likely than parents who use a family, friend, or neighbor as their child's primary care provider to rate a provider who tracks children's learning and development using an assessment tool as "extremely important."



Cultural responsiveness

Parents were less consistent in their ratings of family-sensitive caregiving practices and culturally-responsive caregiving. While some practices were endorsed as "extremely important" by 80 percent of the parents, several practices received such ratings from closer to 50 percent of parents. These findings mirror those from qualitative interviews conducted with a similar group of parents in Minnesota.¹ It is unclear if this is because parents have less familiarity with these practices in relation to quality caregiving and teaching, these practices are of less concern to parents, or parents are less comfortable talking about family-sensitive caregiving and culturally-responsive caregiving.



1. See Child Trends. (2013). Parental perceptions of quality in early care and education. (Issue Brief #2013.44.) Bethesda, MD: Cleveland, J., Susman-Stillman, A., & Halle, T.