

How Early Head Start Programs Help Meet the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Families

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MATHEMATICA
Policy Research

Acknowledgments

- **OPRE, OHS, and ACF**
- **Amy Madigan, our Baby FACES Federal Project Officer**
- **89 Early Head Start programs, their staff, and nearly 1,000 families and children**

Roadmap

- **Brief overview of the Early Head Start program and the Baby FACES study**
- **Describe enrolled families and child care use when children were 1–3 years old**
- **Describe the supports programs offer families**
 - Also describe how sample programs responded to expansion from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- **Describe families' use of child care services after leaving Early Head Start**

What Is Early Head Start?

- **A two-generation program for low-income pregnant women and families with children up to age 3**
- **Provides comprehensive services to families and children both directly and through referrals to community partners**
- **Program services include:**
 - Center-based services
 - Home-based services (home visiting)
 - Family child care services
 - Combinations of the above
 - Group socializations and parenting education



What Is Baby FACES?

- **Descriptive study of a nationally representative sample of 89 Early Head Start programs**
 - **Followed newborns and 1-year-olds through their experience in the program**
 - **Rich data from multiple sources:**
 - **Program director interviews**
 - **Parent interviews**
 - **Staff interviews (home visitors and teachers)**
 - **Staff-child reports**
 - **Classroom and home visit observations**
 - **Direct in-home child assessments at ages 2 and 3**
 - **Weekly services offered and received**
- Used for today's presentation

Methods

■ Annual parent interview

- Samples are both cohorts combined at each age
 - Samples change as families leave the program over time

■ Annual program director interviews

- Represent all 89 programs in the study, although the respondent may have changed over time
- ARRA launched soon after the 2009 data collection
- Added items in 2010 and 2011 to learn how programs receiving ARRA funds used them

Early Head Start Family Characteristics



Families' Use of Early Head Start Program Options (age 1)

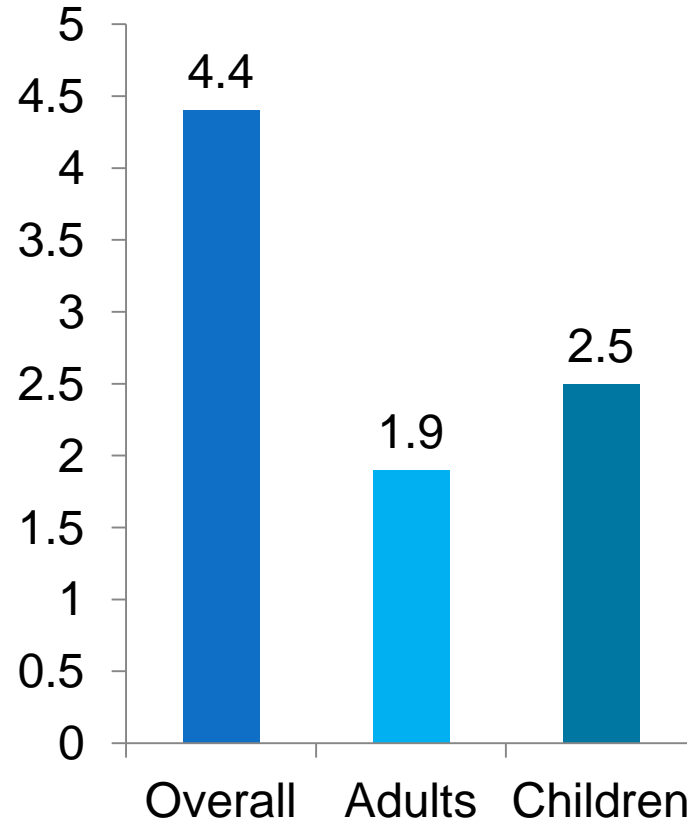
- 43% were in the center-based option
- 52% were in the home-based option
- 5% were in the combination option (receiving both center days and home visiting)
 - This group is excluded from further analysis
- 1% were in the family child care option
 - This group also is excluded from further analysis

Families' Characteristics When Children Were Age 1

ALL FAMILIES

- **Race/ethnicity**
 - 36% white
 - 35% Hispanic
 - 18% African American
- **48% 1-bio. parent, 47% 2-bio. parent households**
- **17% multigenerational households**

Household Size and Composition



Source: 2009 and 2010 Parent Interview.
Sample size = 752.

Families Face Many Challenges (Age 1)

Center-Based	Home-Based
Income to Needs Ratio 1.4	1.0
Median Household Income \$17,500	\$16,800
Mothers' Education 33% less than high school	41% less than high school
Working Parent Household (includes taking classes/in training) 73%	45%
Moved in Past Year 35%	28%

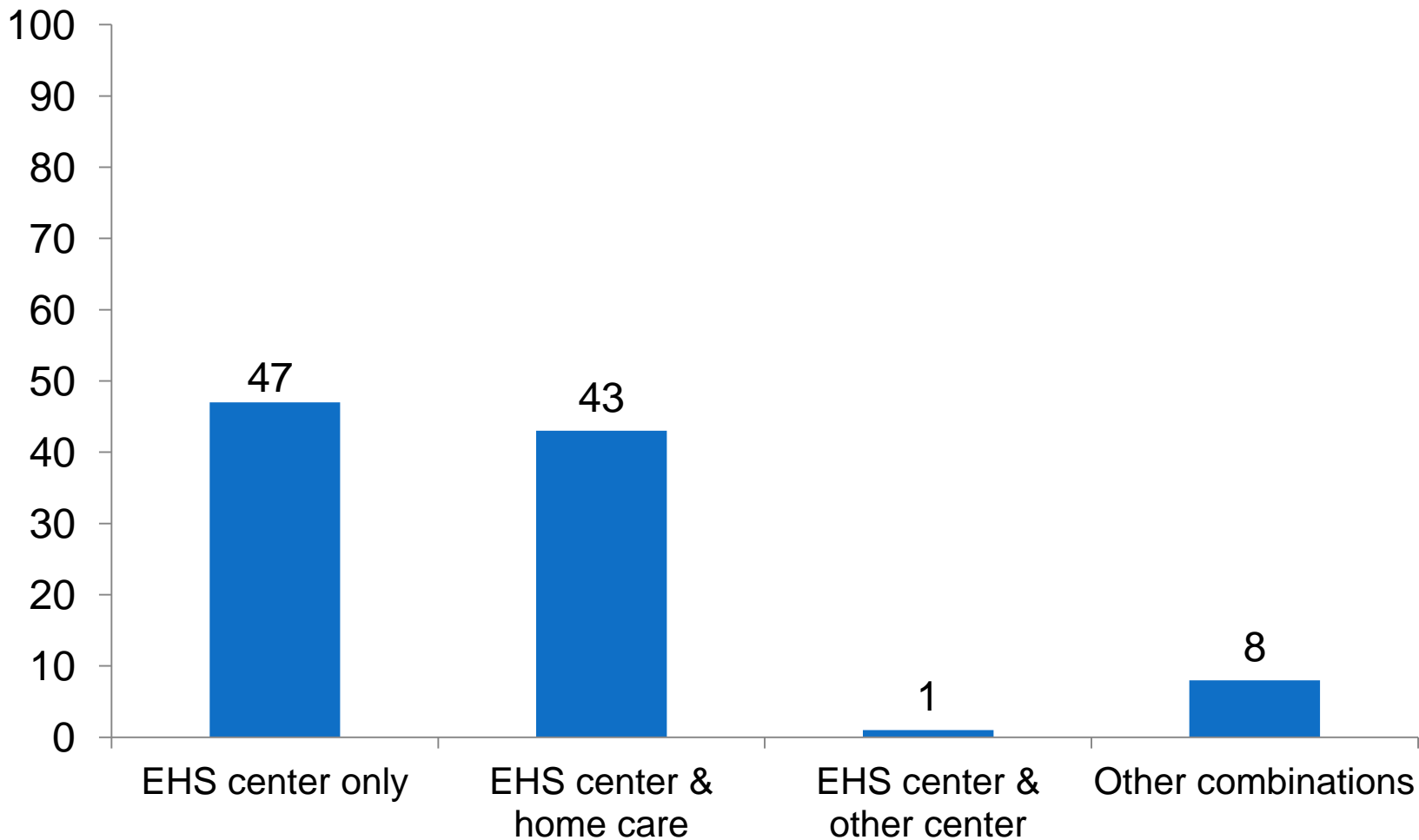
Use of Child Care Overall Is High, Remains Stable

- **72% of all 1-year-olds received regular nonparental care (includes EHS center-based services)**
 - (20+ percentage points higher than in ECLS-B)
- **By ages 2 and 3, 75% of children still enrolled were in regular nonparental care**



Mix of Child Care Arrangements at Age 1, for Center-Based Families

Percentage of Families

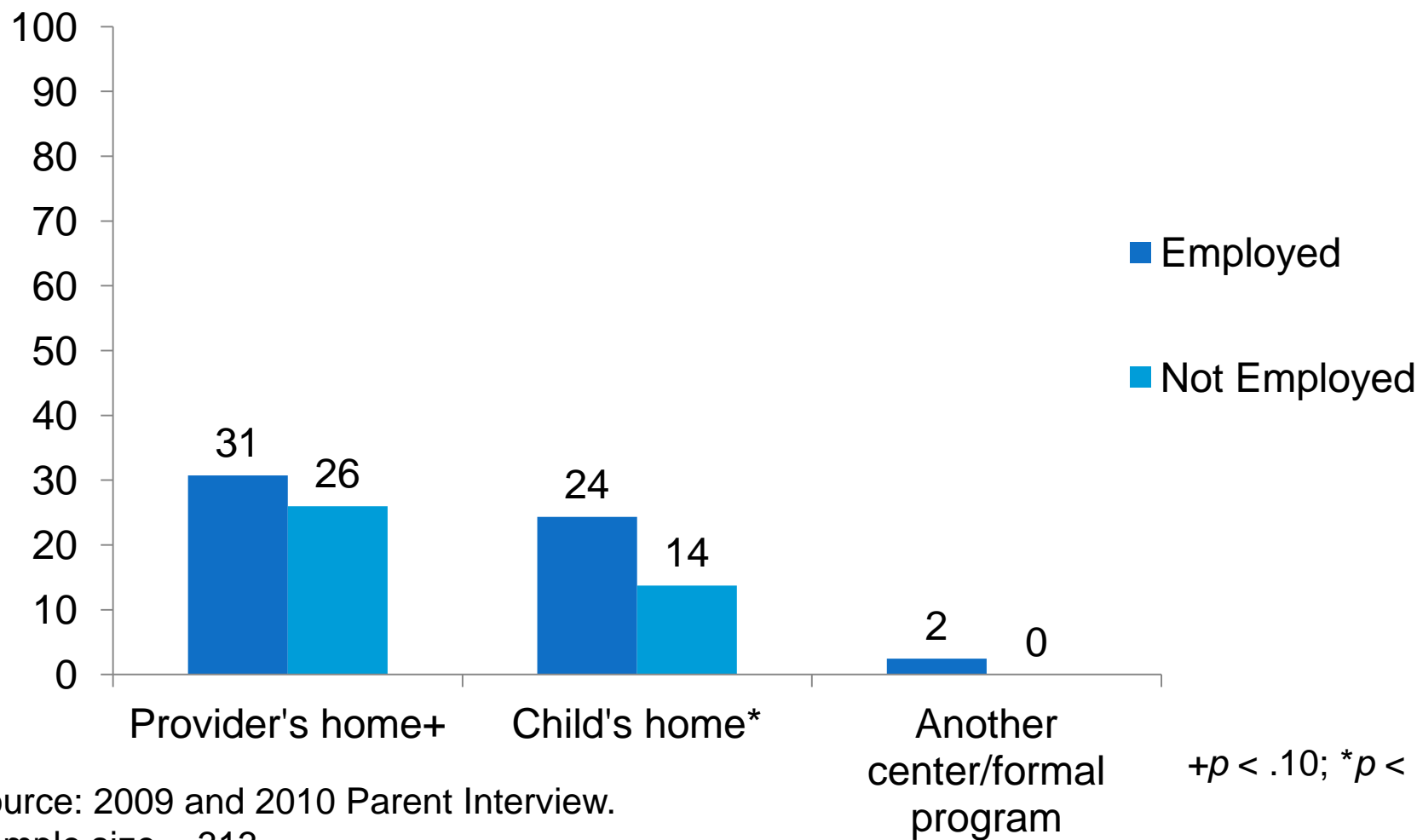


Source: Parent interview 2009 and 2010.

Sample size = 323.

Use of Child Care Among Center-Based Families, at Age 1, by Household Employment Status^a

Percentage of Families



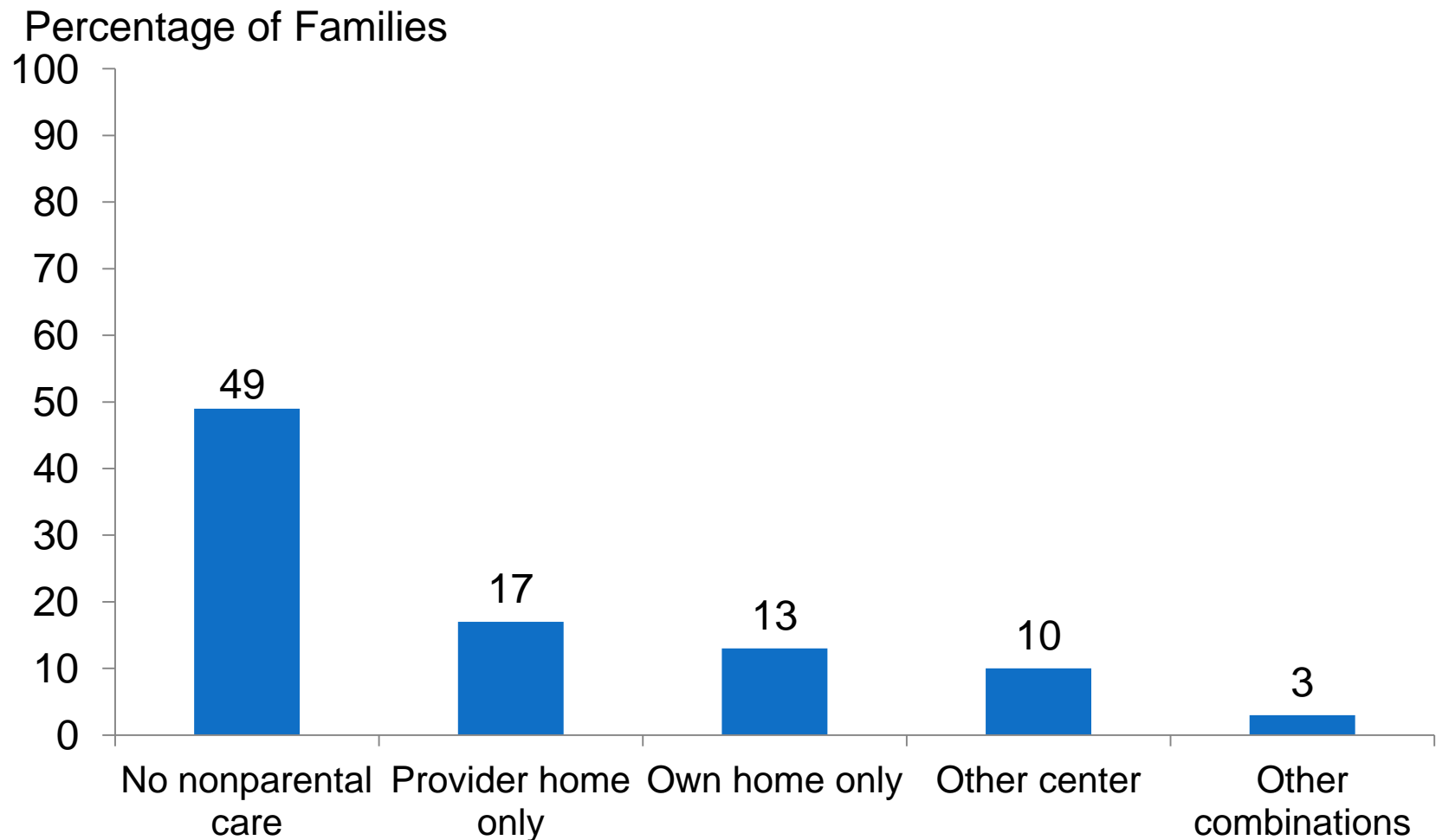
⁺ $p < .10$; ^{*} $p < .05$.

Source: 2009 and 2010 Parent Interview.

Sample size = 313.

^aEmployed includes being in school or training. Not employed is none of these.

Mix of Child Care Arrangements at Age 1, for Home-Based Families

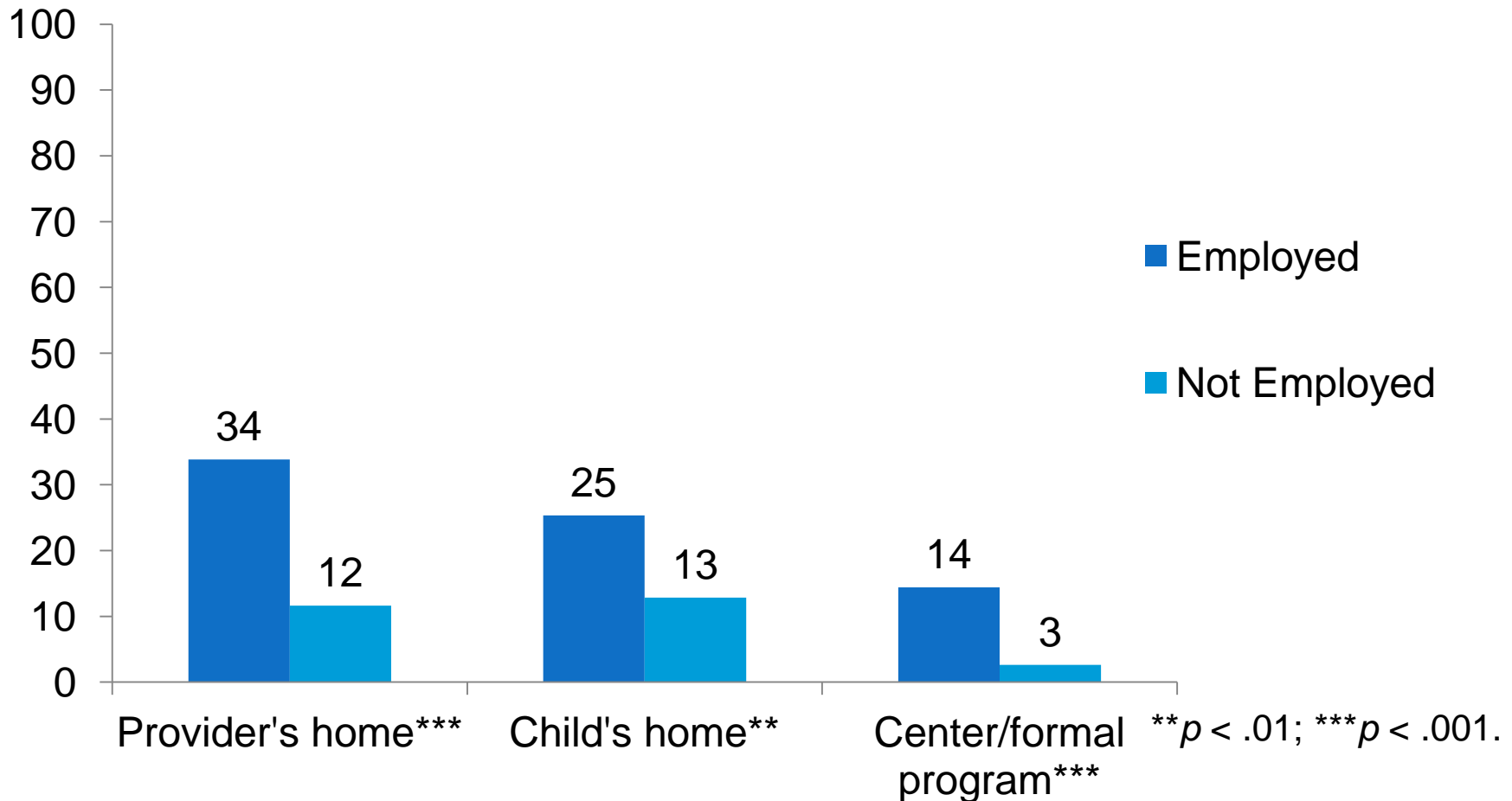


Source: Parent interview 2009 and 2010.

Sample size = 362.

Use of Child Care Among Home-Based Families at Age 1, by Household Employment Status^a

Percentage of Families



Source: 2009 and 2010 Parent Interview.

Sample size = 344.

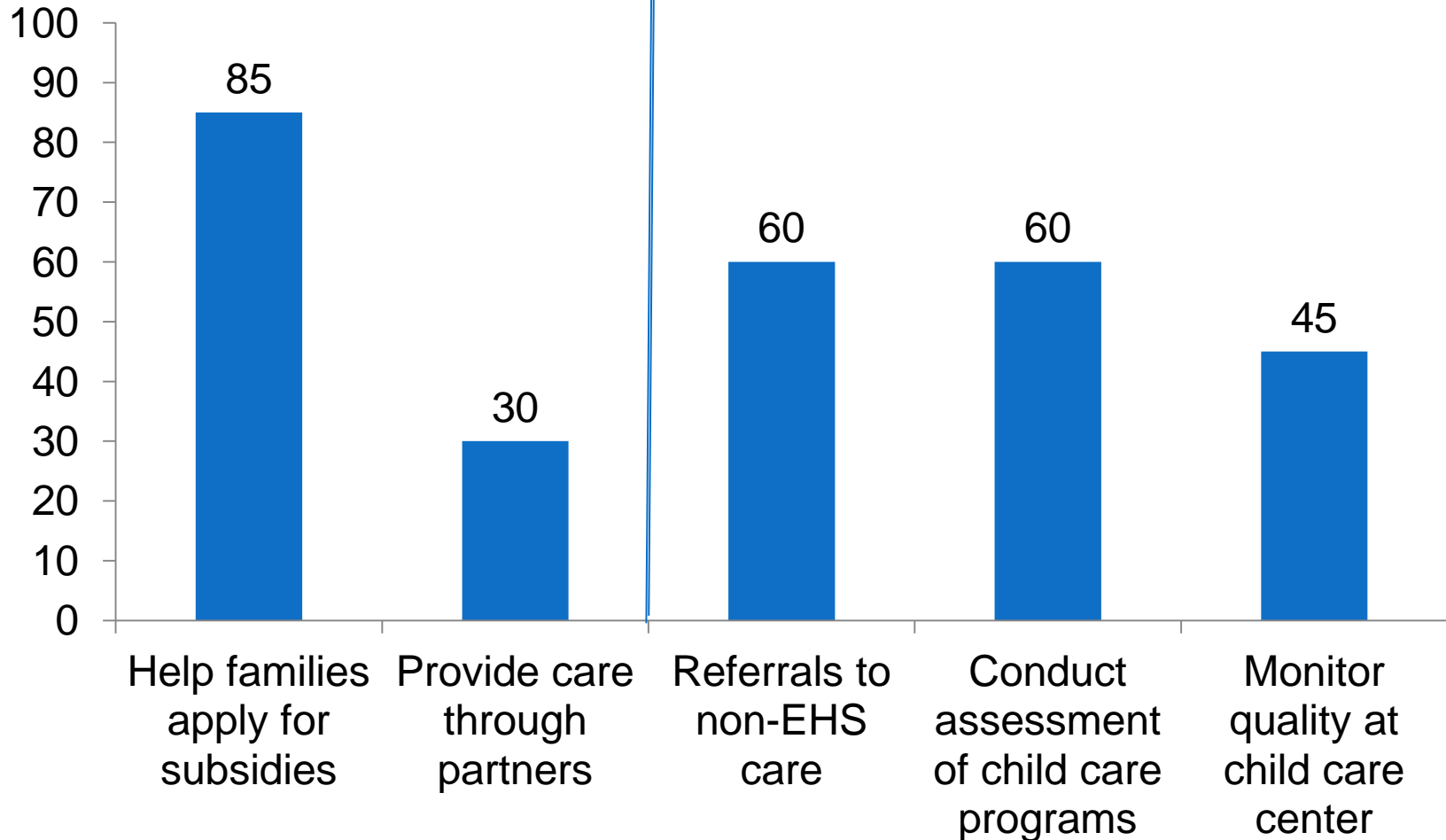
^aEmployed includes being in school or training. Not employed is none of these.

How Programs Support Families' Child Care Needs



Most Programs Facilitate Access to Child Care

Percentage of Programs



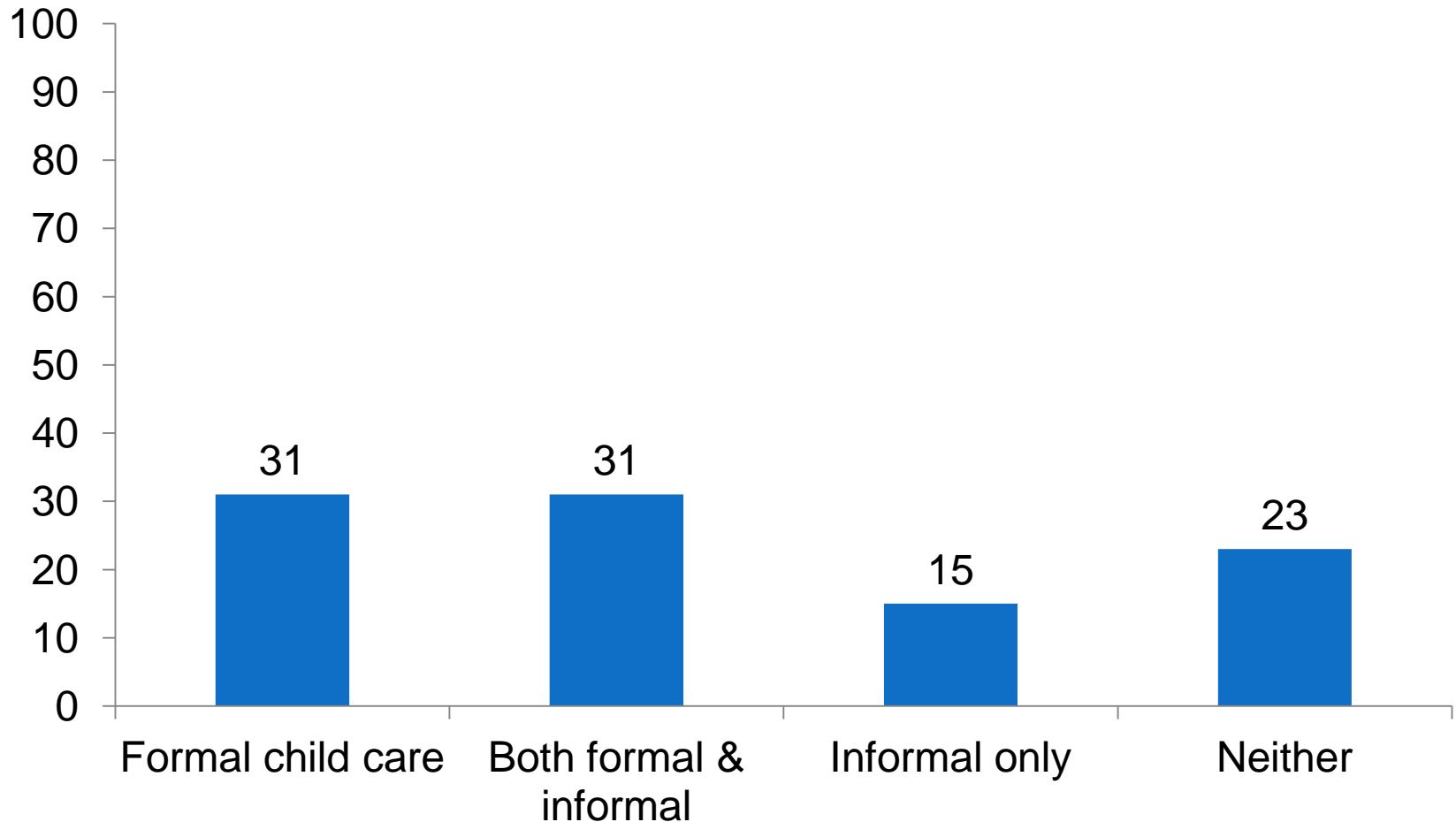
Source: Program Director Interview, 2011.
Sample size = 89.

Exiting Families Received Early Head Start Assistance to Find Child Care

- **Among the 21% of families who left EHS before their child turned 3 (“early exiters”):**
 - 88% said EHS helped with referrals/identified other care arrangements
 - 23% said they attended another early childhood program (6% attended another EHS)
- **Among those who left after age 3 (“graduates”), said EHS staff:**
 - Had a meeting to discuss transition (89%)
 - Helped find other formal program (74%)
 - Discussed eligibility requirements of other programs (64%)
 - Put them in touch with new teacher (64%)

Use of Care After Graduating Early Head Start

Percentage of Families



Source: Parent matriculation interview.
Sample size = 336.

*Formal care is Head Start, center-based child care, or a pre-k program.

How Baby FACES Programs Responded to the ARRA Expansion



ARRA Programs Added Center-Based Services

- **58% of Baby FACES programs received ARRA funds**

Of those:

- **88% added new center-based slots**
- **75% added new home-based slots**
- **6 formerly home-based-only programs added center-based slots**
- **On average, programs added 45 new center-based and 5 family child care slots**
- **48% increased number of child care partnerships (Mean = 1.6 new)**
- **Nearly all (98%) filled slots as expected**

Takeaways

- **Families want and use child care at high rates**
 - Families in the center-based option frequently use other child care arrangements in addition to EHS
 - Employed home-based families are more likely to use nonparental care than nonemployed home-based families
 - Nearly half of all home-based families report not using any regular nonparental care
- **Programs offer a variety of supports to access care after leaving the program (both for those exiting early and those who graduate)**
- **Baby FACES programs tended to use expansion funds to add center-based slots**

For More Information

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