



THE CHICAGO UNIVERSAL PRE-K STUDY

Early Care and Education Trends in Chicago's 47th Ward

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“Early Care and Education Trends in Chicago’s 47th Ward”

by **Terri J. Sabol** and **Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach**

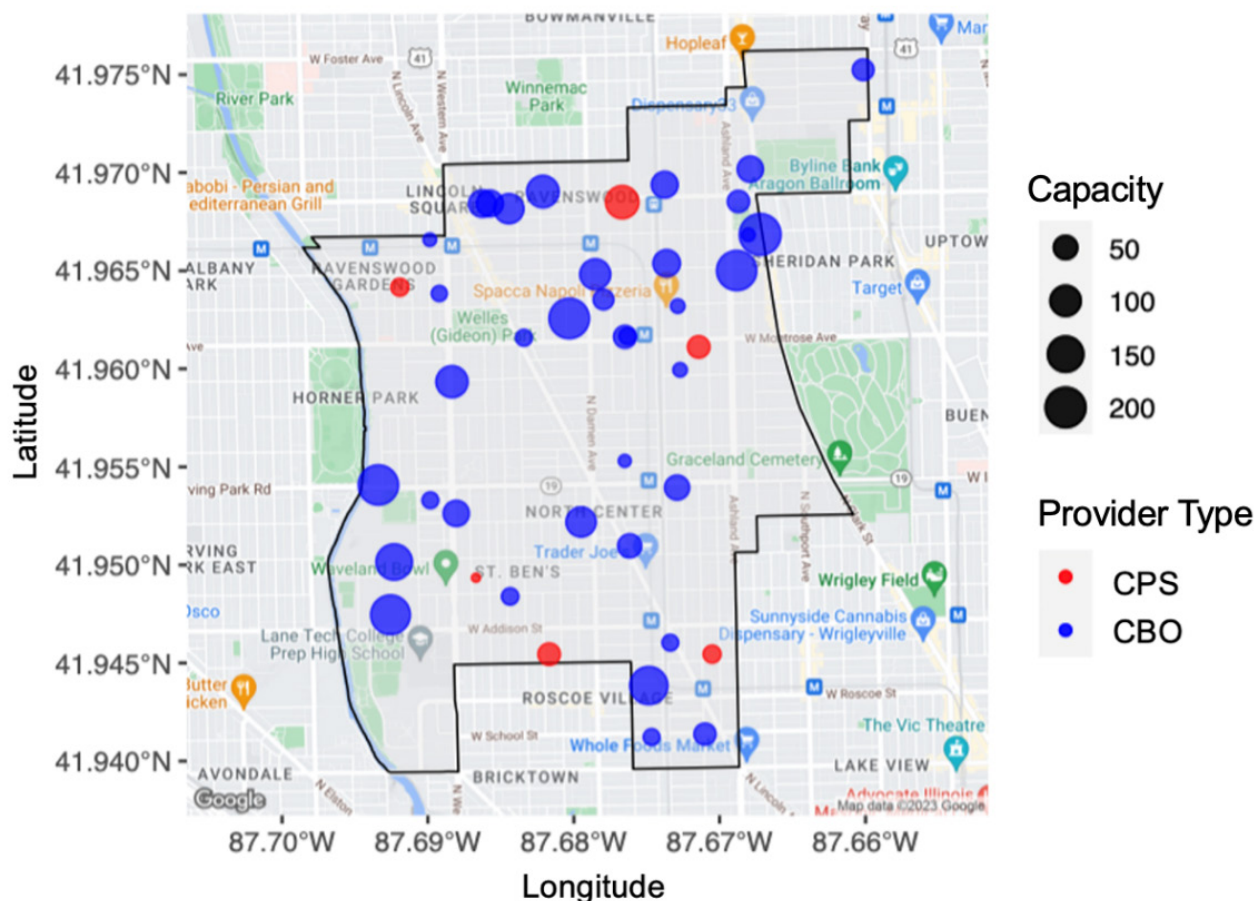
at the Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University

Overview of Chicago’s 47th Ward Early Care and Education (ECE) System

The City of Chicago is comprised of 50 wards or legislative districts that are each represented by an elected alderman. The 47th Ward is on Chicago’s North Side and covers much of the Lincoln Square and Ravenswood neighborhoods. The early care and education (ECE) system in the 47th Ward includes a combination of school-based prekindergarten (provided by Chicago Public Schools) and center-based and family childcare providers (provided by community-based organizations).

In the 2021–22 school year, six Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in the 47th Ward provided prekindergarten (pre-K) for 3- and 4-year-olds. In addition, 30 community-based organizations (CBOs), including center-based and family childcare providers, offered care for children up to age 5. In this report, we describe trends in capacity and enrollment for both CPS pre-K programs and CBO childcare providers in the 47th Ward.

Figure 1: Map of CPS Pre-K Programs and Childcare Providers Run by Community-Based Organizations and Their Capacity in 2022



Note: Capacity in the CPS pre-K programs (indicated by the red dots) is the sum of half- and full-day capacity for 3- and 4-year-olds. Capacity in the CBO childcare providers (indicated by the blue dots) represents the total capacity for children from birth to school age.

Figure 1, above, maps all the CPS pre-K programs (red dots) and CBO childcare providers (blue dots) in the ward and their capacity in 2021–22. The size of the circle demonstrates the capacity size, with larger circles demonstrating larger capacity. In 2021–22, the average capacity for CBO childcare providers was 72 seats, with a range of 7 to 216. The average capacity for CPS pre-K providers was 41 seats, with a range of 4 to 120.

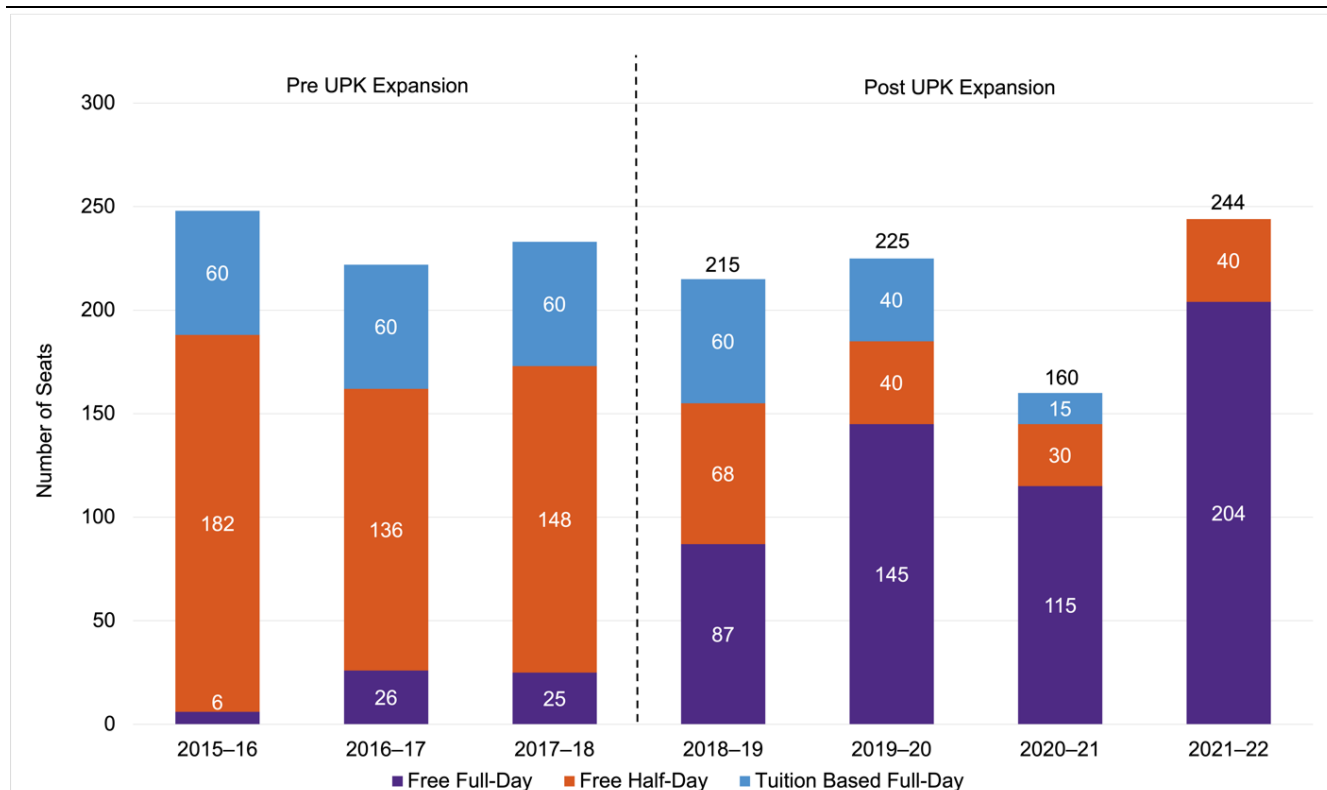
CPS Pre-K Capacity in the 47th Ward, 2015–16 to 2021–22

In the 2018–19 school year, Chicago began expanding free, full-day pre-K for all 4-year-olds in the city through CPS, a policy known as Universal Prekindergarten or UPK. The UPK expansion took place in 212 CPS schools across the district. Some CPS schools in the district also offered pre-K programming before the expansion but did not participate in it, and others did not offer any forms of pre-K. Most of

Chicago's pre-K capacity before the expansion was in the form of free, half-day programming made available through state and federal programs such as Title I, Head Start, and Preschool 4 All. Five out of six CPS schools (Audubon, Hamilton, McPherson, Ravenswood, and Waters) in the 47th Ward participated in the UPK expansion.

Figure 2 presents the pre-K capacity in CPS schools in Ward 47 from 2015–16 to 2021–22. We measure capacity as the number of free, full-day pre-K seats offered for 3- and 4-year-olds at pre-K programs in CPS schools, regardless of the number of children enrolled in those seats. As demonstrated in the figure, pre-K capacity stayed mostly steady from 2015–16 to 2021–22 (e.g., 248 seats in 2015–16 and 244 seats in 2021–22), with a notable decline in 2020–21 due to COVID-19. The composition of seats, however, changed significantly. Following the start of the UPK expansion in 2018–19, the CPS schools in the 47th Ward converted many free, half-day seats to full-day seats, and phased out tuition-based pre-K entirely by 2021–22. For example, in 2015–2016, there were 182 free, half-day seats and 6 free, full-day seats. By 2021–22, this pattern essentially flipped, with only 40 free, half-day seats and 204 full-day seats. In addition, all tuition-based, full-day seats were replaced by free, full-day seats by 2021–22.

Figure 2: CPS Pre-K Capacity from 2015–16 to 2021–22



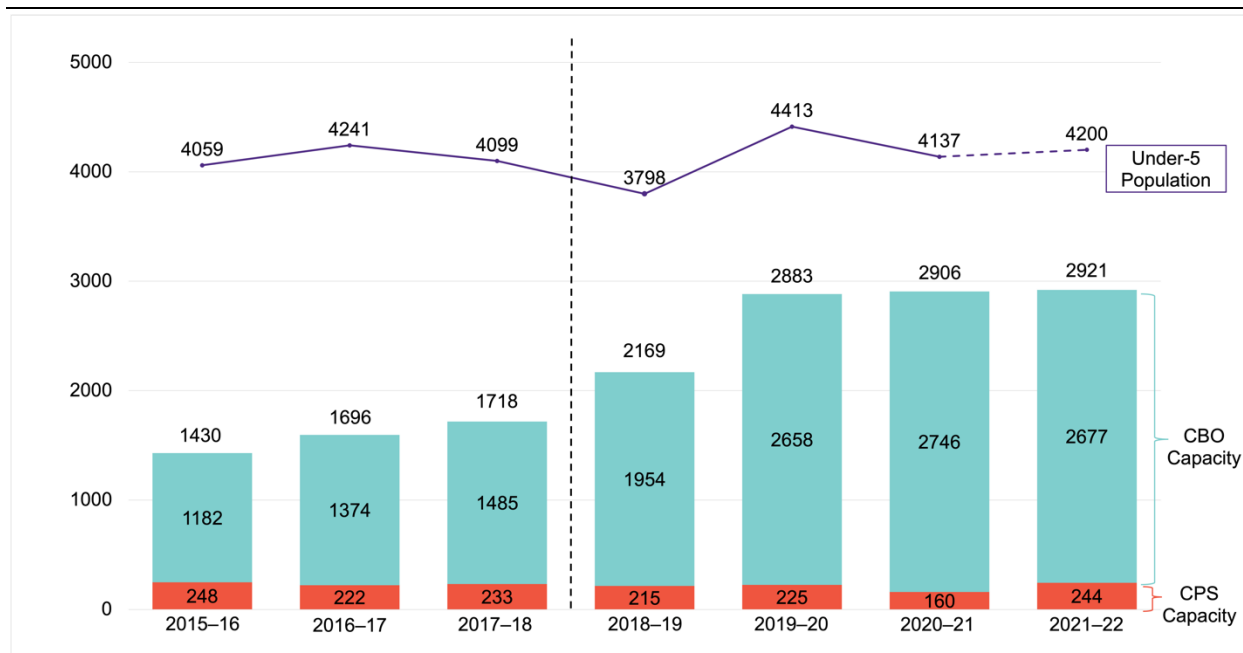
Note: Five out of six CPS schools (Audubon, Hamilton, McPherson, Ravenswood, and Waters) participated in the UPK expansion. Audubon, McPherson, and Ravenswood expanded in 2018–19, and Hamilton and Waters expanded in 2021–22.

Total Early Care and Education Capacity in the 47th Ward, 2015–16 to 2021–22

While overall capacity in school-based programs has remained essentially constant, CBO childcare providers have significantly increased their capacity, leading to an overall increase in early care and education seats within the 47th Ward. Figure 3 presents the total capacity for early care and education (defined by CPS capacity plus CBO capacity) from 2015–16 to 2021–22. Overall, capacity in CBO childcare providers increased by 126% (from 1,182 to 2,677 seats) and contributed to a 104% increase in total capacity (from 1,430 to 2,921 seats; see blue bars in Figure 3).

Over this period, the population of children under the age of 5 in the 47th Ward remained steady at roughly 4,000, as shown by the purple line in Figure 3 below. As a result, the ward saw a higher capacity of school- or community-based programming per child. In 2015–16, childcare capacity was only 35% as large as the under-5 population, but by 2021–22 it had doubled to 70% of the population. Seats are now available for most children in the 47th Ward. (Appendix Table A1 provides details on each CPS and CBO provider's capacity, and Appendix Figure A2 has information on when providers opened and closed.)

Figure 3: Under-5 Population and Early Care and Education Capacity



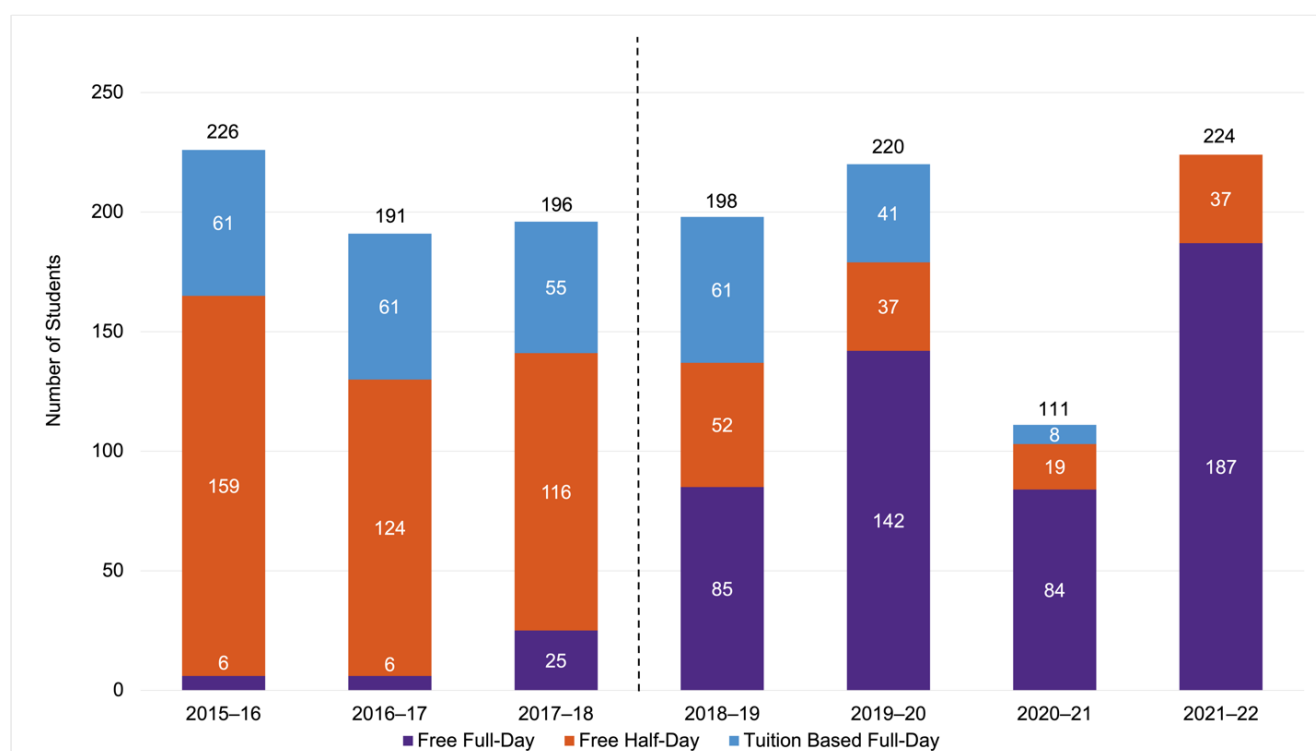
Note: The under-5 population in 2021–22 is based on a linear prediction of the total under-5 population from 2010–21.

CPS Pre-K Enrollment in 47th Ward, 2015–16 to 2021–22

The total number of students enrolled in CPS pre-K in the 47th Ward has largely remained steady over the past few years. Prior to 2018–19, Chicago’s school-based pre-K landscape included a combination of half- or full-day programming, as well as free or tuition-based programming.

As shown below in Figure 4, the CPS schools in the 47th Ward primarily provided half-day pre-K in the three school years prior to the UPK expansion—70% in 2015–16, 65% 2016–17, and 59% in 2017–18. Once the policy was implemented, the number of students enrolled in free, full-day pre-K jumped from only 25 students in 2017–18 to 85 in 2018–19 and continued to expand—with the exception of the 2020–21 school year which was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic—to 187 students in 2021–22. The overall level of enrollment was relatively stable, with increases in free, full-day enrollment offset by declines in the number of children attending half-day pre-K and tuition-based pre-K—with the exception of the 2020–21 school year. Combining enrollment numbers (Figure 4) with seat capacity (Figure 2), 92% of seats were filled in 2021–22.

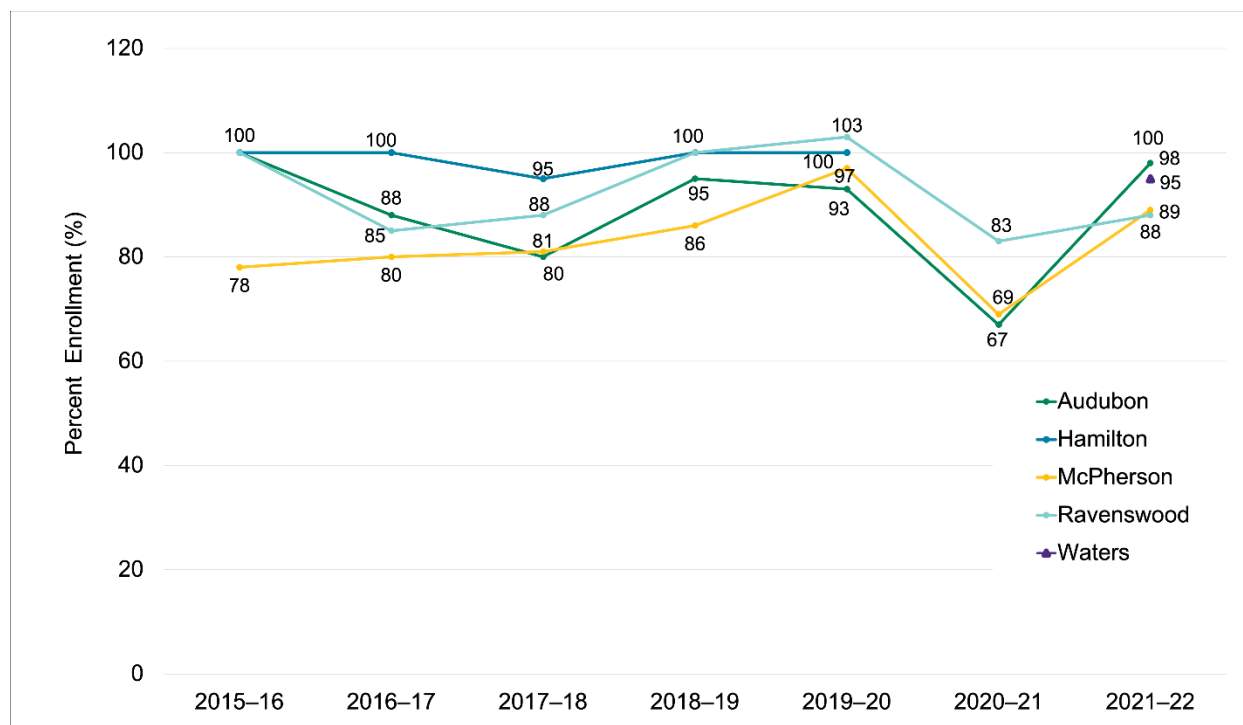
Figure 4: CPS Pre-K Enrollment from 2015–16 to 2021–22



Note: Five out of six CPS schools (Audubon, Hamilton, McPherson, Ravenswood, and Waters) participated in the UPK expansion. Audubon, McPherson, and Ravenswood enrolled in 2018–19, and Hamilton and Waters enrolled in 2021–22.

We also investigated enrollment rates—that is, the percentage of pre-K seats that were filled—at the school-level to understand enrollment trends over the past few years. Figure 5 displays the enrollment rate at CPS schools in the 47th Ward. From 2015–16 to 2019–20, enrollment rates held steady at around 100%. Enrollment fell across all schools in 2020–21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but rebounded to nearly 100% in most schools by 2021–22.

Figure 5: Percent Enrollment in CPS Schools in the 47th Ward



Note: The enrollment percentage is calculated by dividing the number of children enrolled in pre-K by pre-K capacity in each school. Waters opened in 2021–22 and is represented by a single point. Enrollment data for Hamilton are not available in 2020–21 but are available for all other years including 2021–22.

Conclusion

In this report, we focus on the early care and education market in Chicago’s 47th Ward, which includes six CPS pre-K programs and 30 community-based providers. Pre-K capacity in the six CPS schools remained steady since 2015–16; however, following the UPK expansion in 2018–19, the CPS schools in the 47th Ward converted many free, half-day seats to full-day seats and phased out tuition-based pre-K entirely by 2021–22. While school-based capacity remained steady, community-based providers significantly increased their capacity to create an overall increase in pre-K seats in the 47th Ward. Pre-K enrollment at CPS schools was also steady over this period, but mirroring capacity, the composition of enrollment shifted to more full-day and less half-day enrollment. The enrollment rates at the school-based programs fell significantly in 2020–21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but rebounded to nearly 100% by 2021–22.

APPENDIX

Description of Methods

The tables and figures in this report are based on analysis of citywide administrative data from CPS and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). Our analysis includes 43 providers in the 47th Ward from 2015–16 to 2021–22, including six CPS schools, and 37 community-based providers in this time period.

Data Sources

We established a data use agreement with CPS. Our study draws from existing administrative and census data from 2015–23, including:

- UPK/school-based pre-K expansion year data from CPS
- Enrollment and capacity on school-based pre-K programs for 3- and 4-year-olds from CPS
- Enrollment in first to fifth grades from CPS
- Five-year estimates for community characteristics from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS)

Table A1: Under-5 Capacity of CPS and CBO Providers in the 47th Ward in 2022

Provider Name	Provider Only		First Year Open
	Age Range Served	Total Capacity	
Chicago Public Schools (6)			
Audubon	3Y & 4Y	40	≤ 2015–16
Hamilton	4Y	20	≤ 2015–16
McPherson	3Y & 4Y	120	≤ 2015–16
Ravenswood	4Y	40	≤ 2015–16
Waters	4Y	20	2021–22

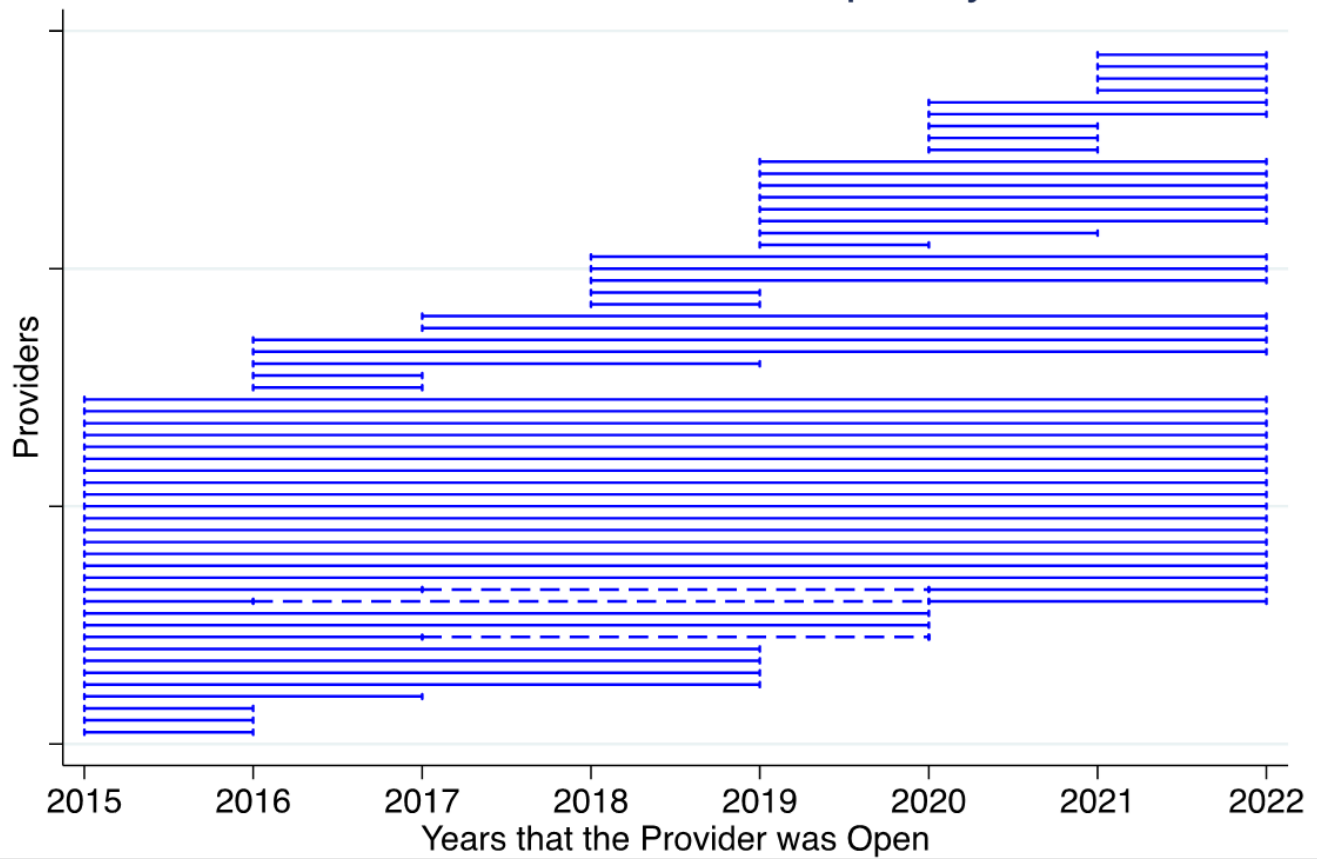
Note: Bell school also has a 3-year-old program which serves 4-6 deaf children each year; however, due to the small sample size we are not including it.

Center-Based Providers (30)			
Concordia Place	2Y to 13Y	93	≤ 2015–16
Apple Tree Learning Center	2Y to 6Y	55	≤ 2015–16
Adler Schools Inc.	6W to 13Y	67	≤ 2015–16
JCYS Iris & Steven Podolsky Family Ct.	15M to 5Y	113	2019–20
Lakeview Development Center	6W to 5Y	39	≤ 2015–16
South-East Asia Center, Broadway	3Y to 5Y	36	≤ 2015–16
Sunnyside Child Care Center	6W to 2Y	31	≤ 2015–16
Henry's House	3Y to 5Y	18	≤ 2015–16
Kidz Creative Corner	6W to 6Y	49	≤ 2015–16
Chicago Montessori	15M to 3Y	10	≤ 2015–16
Ladybug & Friends Daycare & Preschool LLC	6W to 6Y	72	≤ 2015–16
Queen of Angels School	2Y to 2Y	14	≤ 2015–16
Tiny Giants Early Learning Center	6W to 6Y	216	≤ 2015–16
Children's Lighthouse	6W to 13Y	196	2017–18
Prairieland Montessori	3M to 3Y	38	≤ 2015–16
New Einstein's Academy	15M to 5Y	71	2019–20
Tiny Giants Early Learning (NC)	6W to 5Y	63	≤ 2015–16
Newport Children's Academy	6W to 6Y	171	2016–17
Concordia Place*	6W to 5Y	67	2016–17

Ravenswood Montessori School	2Y to 5Y	99	2017–18
Songbird Academy	6W to 5Y	43	2018–19
Rayito de Sol Spanish Immersion ELC	6W to 6Y	190	2018–19
Kidz Creative Corner	6W to 6Y	110	2018–19
Ravenswood Baptist Church & Ravenswood Christian School	3M to 13Y	200	2019–20
The Gardner School of Ravenswood	6W to 6Y	196	2021–22
Open Space Early Learning Center	6W to 5Y	63	2019–20
Montessori Gifted Prep	2Y to 5Y	92	2019–20
Songbird Academy*	15M to 3Y	16	2021–22
Lakeview Preschool Academy	2Y to 5Y	16	2020–21
The Goddard School	6W to 13Y	152	2019–20
Family Childcare (7)			
Holzman, Janet L.	6W to 13Y	16	≤ 2015–16
Caballero, Armanda	6W to 13Y	8	≤ 2015–16
Ramirez-Bernstein, Jeanette	6W to 13Y	16	≤ 2015–16
Taylor, Cynthia	6W to 13Y	16	≤ 2015–16
Stamenkovic, Sonja	6W to 13Y	10	2021–22
Llanos, Luz N.	9W to 13Y	8	2020–21
Radovanovic, Bozana	3M to 13Y	7	2021–22

*Center reopened after closure.

Figure A2: Years that Providers Were Open in the 47th by Provider



Note: The 58 horizontal lines represent the unique providers in the 47th Ward. The dashed lines indicate the provider was closed during that period. In 2022, 37 of the 58 providers were open.

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