

Surveys of the ECE Workforce

From the earliest days of March 2020, NAEYC has been committed to understanding and sharing the breadth of the crisis and the challenges child care programs and early childhood educators are facing across states and settings. Nearly 50,000 individuals working in child care centers and family child care homes have responded to seven NAEYC early childhood education field surveys.

Results from our most recent survey, conducted November 2022, show that federal relief has provided critical help, but uncertainty about the future is impacting the present. Staffing shortages caused by low compensation are leading to supply shortages that threaten families' ability to work, children's access to safe and quality care, and educators' health and well-being. Far too many educators are considering leaving the field, threatening an exodus that—if not reversed with the support of Congressional investments in the ECE workforce—will deepen the supply, quality, and affordability crises for years to come.

FOR ALL NATIONAL AND STATE-SPECIFIC SURVEY DATA, GO TO

[NAEYC.org/pandemic-surveys](https://naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys)



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A State-by-State Look at Child Care in Crisis

Understanding Early Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic
 March 27, 2020

On March 12, as the country was beginning to recognize the ways in which the spread of the coronavirus would jeopardize lives and livelihoods, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) developed a brief survey asking child care providers to share the challenges they were expecting to face and to comment on what they needed to protect children, families, and our nation's supply of child care programs.

Ultimately, nearly 50% of respondents noted that they would not survive a closure of more than two weeks without significant public investment and support that would allow them to compensate and retain staff pay net of mortgages, and cover other fixed costs. An additional quarter of respondents did not know how long they could close and still re-open without support.

State-by-state data is shared below and can also be accessed via <https://naeyc.org/state-by-state>. This survey was entirely voluntary and shared by word-of-mouth, so the numbers of respondents in each state varies widely and may not be representative. [Child Care in Crisis](https://naeyc.org/state-by-state) alongside NAEYC's [initial recommendations for state action](https://naeyc.org/state-by-state).

You can find updated statements and recommendations on [NAEYC's COVID-19 resources page](https://naeyc.org/state-by-state) and always reach out via email at ed@naeyc.org with questions and to share your stories.

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Holding On Until Help Comes

A Survey Reveals Child Care's Fight to Survive
 July 15, 2020

Our nation's children, families, early childhood educators, and businesses long have been denied the level of public investment necessary to ensure a thriving, high-quality child care system. Now, the lack of sufficient public investment in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced families, educators, and child care programs into a series of impossible choices between health, safety, quality, and financial advocacy.

In telling their stories, child care providers have made it clear that they are doing everything they can to hold their programs together: stretching spending down savings, and sacrificing their own incomes. But the financial cliff is looming, and a new survey from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) of more than 5,000 child care providers from all 50 states, Washington DC and Puerto Rico, shows that if help doesn't come—and soon—in order to save child care, there will be little left of child care to save. The US economy will suffer the consequences as families returning to work can't find quality, reliable care for their children.

Among the key findings:

- 2/5 Approximately two out of five respondents—and half of those who are minority-owned businesses—see certain that they will close permanently without additional public assistance.
- 18% Nationally, 18% of child care centers and 9% of family child care homes remain closed.
- 86% Of those who are open, 86% of respondents are serving fewer children now than they were prior to the pandemic. On average, enrollment is down by 47%.
- 70% At the same time, upwards of 70% of child care centers are incurring substantial, additional costs for staff (79%), cleaning supplies (58%), and personal protective equipment (53).
- 1/4 One in four early childhood educators reported that they have applied for or received unemployment benefits, while a full 73% of programs indicated that they have or will engage in layoffs, furloughs, and/or pay cuts. For minority-owned businesses, the situation is worse; only 12% have not resorted to these measures in order to survive.

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State Data Child Care Providers are Sacrificing to Stay Open and Waiting for Relief

December 2020

The coronavirus pandemic continues to devastate child care programs, affecting children, families, and economies across the country. To understand the depth of the ongoing crisis and the extreme measures child care providers have taken to stay open as long as they can, NAEYC surveyed thousands of programs across states and settings between November 12 and 20, 2020. For access to the national analysis, and prior survey data and analyses from March, May, and July 2020, visit [NAEYC.org/pandemic-surveys](https://naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys).

Individuals who worked in child care programs that have closed are difficult to reach, which means that 93% of respondents to this survey work in programs that to date have managed—at least in great personal and professional cost—to remain open for the children and families they serve.

But open does not mean okay. On a national level:

- 56% of child care centers are losing money each day they remain open.
- 44% are confronting so much uncertainty that they are unable to pay their rent.
- 73% are paying additional costs for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 60% are paying additional costs for staff/ personnel, in an environment in which 60% say recruiting and retaining qualified staff is more difficult now than it was before the pandemic.

State data from 29 states from responses to the November survey are shared on the following pages alongside quotes from child care providers collected through the survey. Despite the variations in the numbers, the data across states and at the national level are remarkably similar in terms of the way they tell, particularly around the measures programs are taking to stay open in the face of higher costs, lower enrollment, and insufficient public support. The data also echo state surveys and data reports. However, because this survey, like the ones before, was entirely voluntary, and because programs that are permanently closed are not reporting, the data are not representative of all child care programs.

Survey respondents are reporting to implement measures to stay open:

- 42% of respondents reported taking on debt for their programs by putting up assets or other items on their own personal credit cards.
- 39% reported trying to meet lenders' needs by dipping into their own personal savings accounts.
- 60% work in programs that have tried to reduce their expenses by foregoing in layoffs, furloughs, and/or pay cuts.

They are doing this as they experience significant increases in operating costs:

- 81% of respondents are paying additional costs for cleaning supplies.
- 73% are paying additional costs for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 60% are paying additional costs for staff/ personnel, in an environment in which 60% say recruiting and retaining qualified staff is more difficult now than it was before the pandemic.

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You can find NAEYC's surveys and related information in [NAEYC.org/pandemic-surveys](https://naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys). If you have questions or want to share your stories of child care and the pandemic, please email ed@naeyc.org.

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Progress and Peril: Child Care at a Crossroads

July 2021

The COVID pandemic has reinforced the essential role of child care and early learning for children, working families, and the economy. Emergency federal and state relief funds have provided critical support for stabilizing child care programs and preventing more widespread permanent program closures, but they do not address the systemic challenges that have plagued the child care market – parents and providers. As such, they are just part of what is needed to recover.

NAEYC's newest survey, completed 3,500 respondents across all 50 states, 2021, working across all states that child care's struggle to survive.

Impact of Relief Funding

In the context of programs that are facing staffing challenges and parents who are facing ongoing pandemic uncertainty, respondents from child care centers and family child care homes that are open report operating at an average enrollment rate of 71% of their licensed capacity, with 48% of enrolled children attending on an average day. However, centers report a 62% attendance average when family child care homes, which have a higher enrollment rate of 79%, report that only 37% of enrolled children are attending on an average day.

The data speaks clearly to the important role that relief funding has played in supporting program stability, by providing funds so that states can pay programs based on enrollment, not attendance. Further, that moving back towards payments based on the fluctuating attendance rates of any individual child, states would make structural changes permanent, so that parents and programs can count on reliable and predictable support.

Relief funding has been critical in other ways, for example:

- 40% of respondents working in child care centers and 50% of those working in family child care homes have been able to reduce or delay the pandemic by using their program's stabilization funds.
- Another 28% of those working in child care centers will be able to reduce or delay the pandemic by using their program's stabilization funds, such as coming through the stabilization fund.
- Only 23% of respondents working in family child care homes and their additional staff for their programs. This data demonstrates that more workers have found themselves having to take the pandemic in NAEYC's December respondents had reported taking on programs by putting up assets or other items on their own personal credit cards.

You can find our survey from NAEYC at naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys. For more information, and to share your stories, please email ed@naeyc.org.