



Child Care in COVID-19: Another Look at Parents' Perspective

Highlights from a nationwide survey on parent experiences with child care amid the coronavirus

August 26, 2020



Background and Overview



Background

Focus of August 2020 Survey

- Understand parents' use of child care prior to COVID-19
- Impact of COVID-19 on working parents
- Parents' child care needs during COVID-19
- Parents' decisions to return to child care during COVID-19
- Impact of school reopening policies on parents' child care decisions
- Future implications for the child care industry



Background:

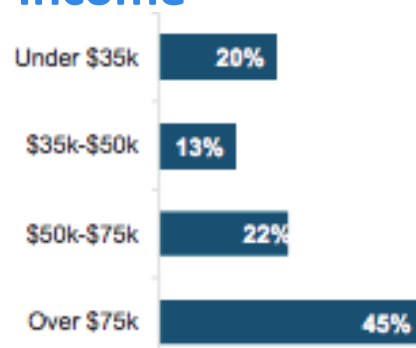
Survey conducted from August 3 - 10 among 1,000 parents who:

- Have children under the age of 5 at home
- Had someone in the household employed in January 2020
- Results have a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points

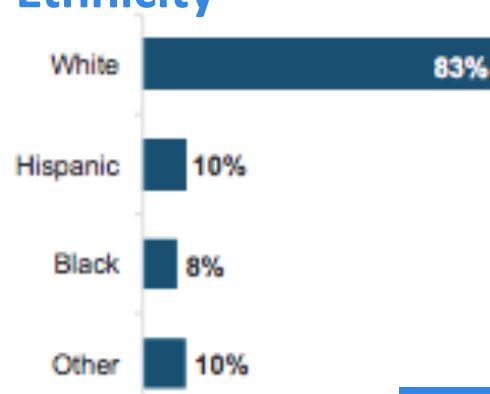


Background: Respondent Profile

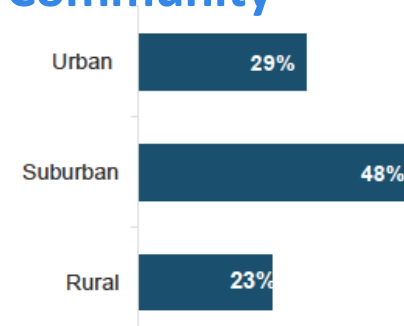
Income



Ethnicity



Community



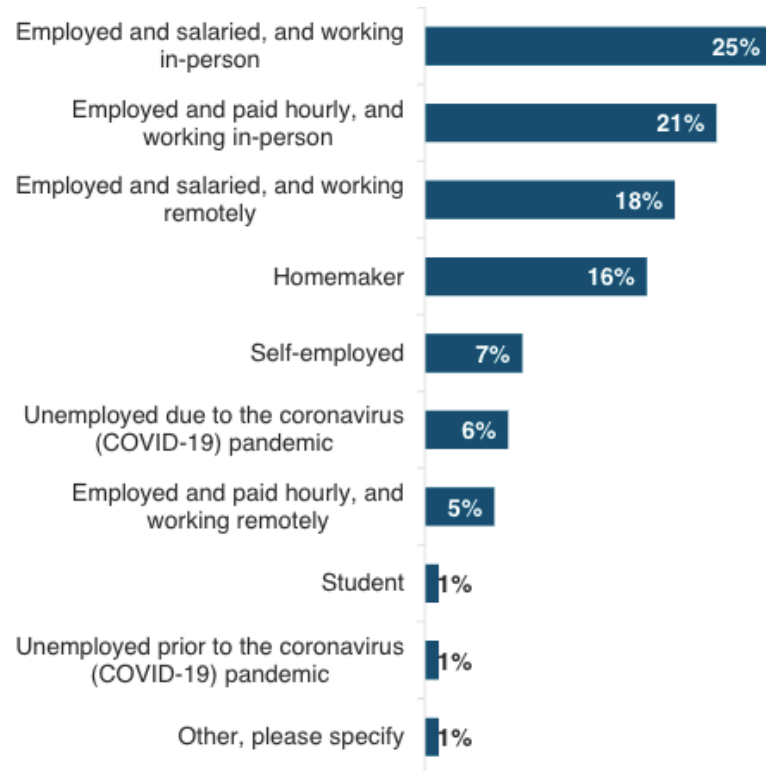
Number of Children Under Age 18

- 35% of parents have 1 child
- 42% have 2 children
- 16% have 3 children
- 4% have 4
- 2% have 5 or more



Background: Respondent Profile

Current Work Status



Multigenerational Households: 33% of respondents are in multigenerational households, in which the household contains at least 2 generations of adults.

Essential Workers: 37% of respondents are considered an essential worker in their state, and 37% of respondents have a spouse or partner who is considered an essential worker.



Key Findings

- 1 The most used child care arrangements parents were using in January 2020 differ by those paying or not paying for child care, income level, and ethnicity.
- 2 COVID-19 is impacting child care providers operating status, and is in turn impacting parents' ability to work.
- 3 A third of parents have sought child care during COVID-19, however it has been difficult for them to find quality child care within their budget.
- 4 When asked about top of mind considerations for sending child back to a child care program, parents reference health and safety precautions, the need for a vaccine, and concern of the sickness spreading.
- 5 Two in five parents with school aged children (38%) will look for a child care provider if their school does not open in the fall. And, 39% of these parents would prefer a formal program or provider to care for their school aged child(ren).



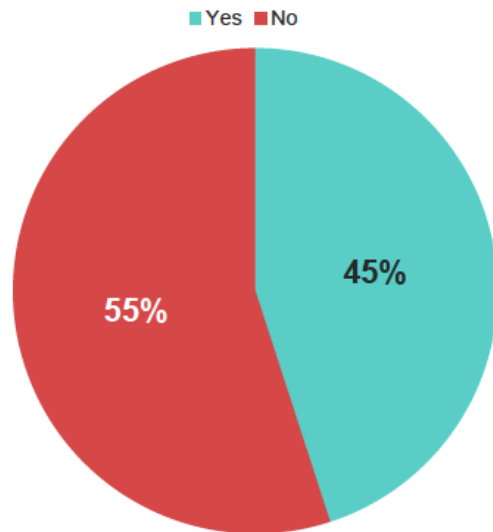
Pre-COVID Child Care Arrangements



Pre-COVID: Who Paid and Who Didn't

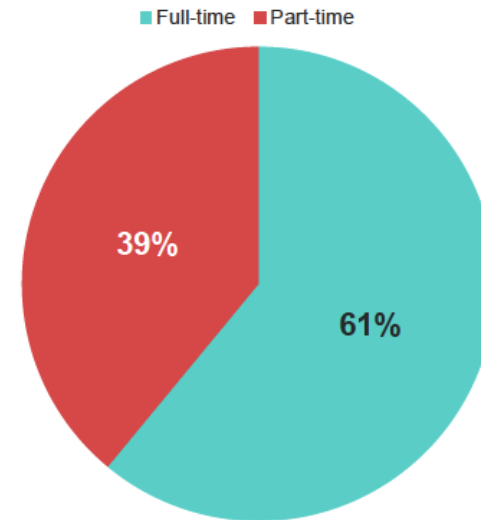
45% of parents were paying for child care in January 2020, and 61% were paying for full-time child care.

Thinking back to January 2020, were you paying for child care for any of your children 5 and under?



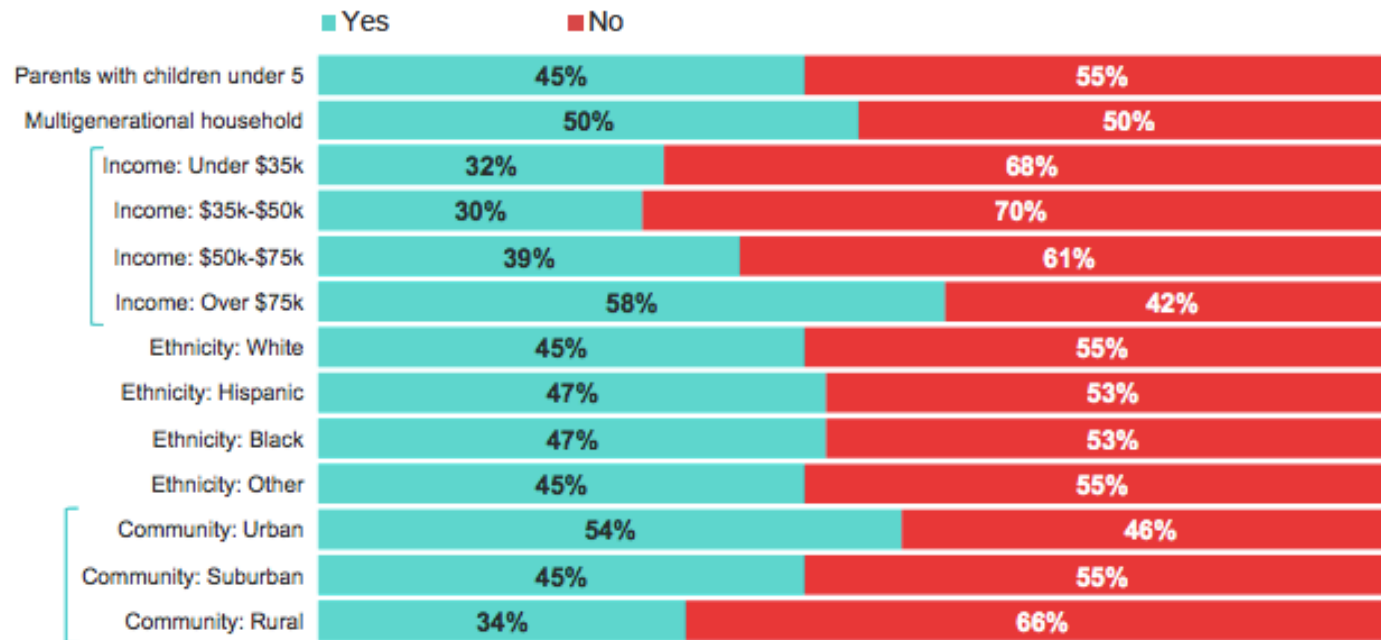
And, were you paying for full-time or part-time child care in January 2020?

PARENTS WHO WERE PAYING FOR CHILD CARE IN JANUARY 2020, n=451



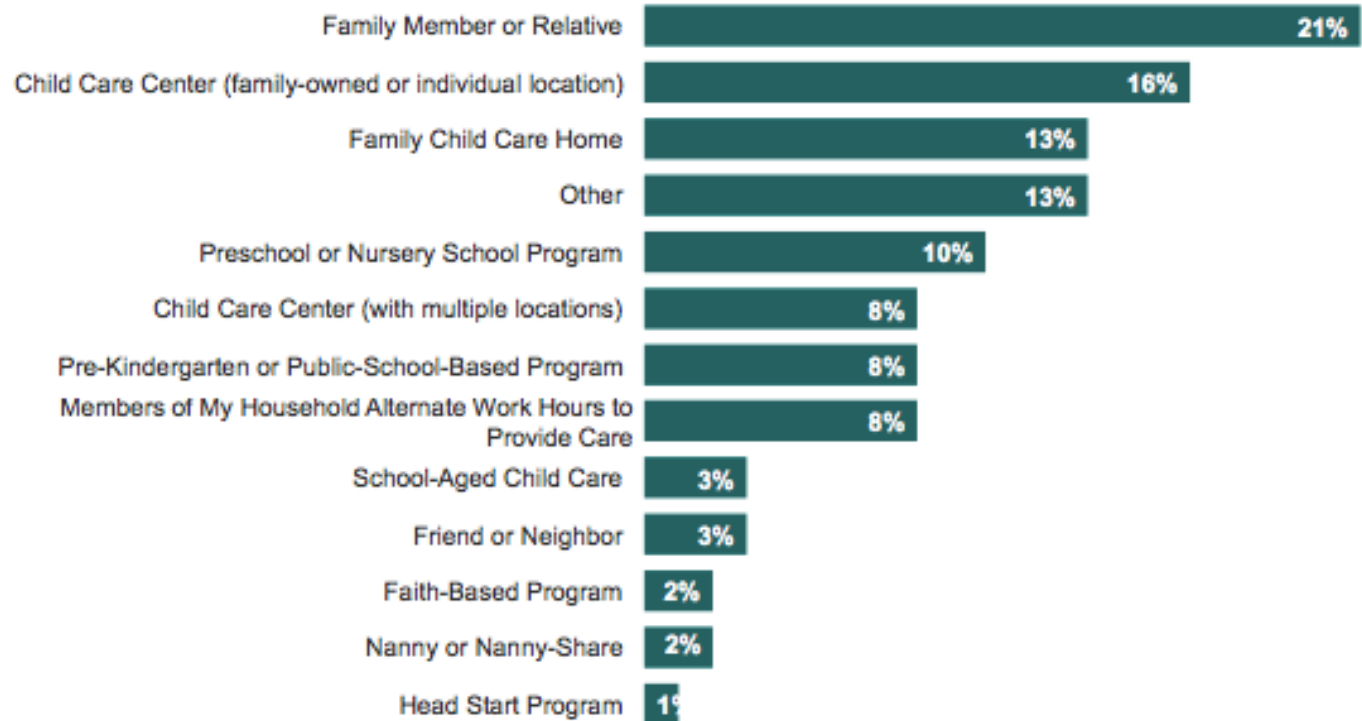
Pre-COVID: Who Paid and Who Didn't

Parents in multigenerational households, those with an annual income over \$75,000, and parents in urban communities were more likely to pay for child care.



Pre-COVID: Primary Child Care Arrangements

In January 2020, parents—both paying and not paying for child care—were more likely to use a family member/relative or a family-owned or individual child care center as their primary child care arrangement.

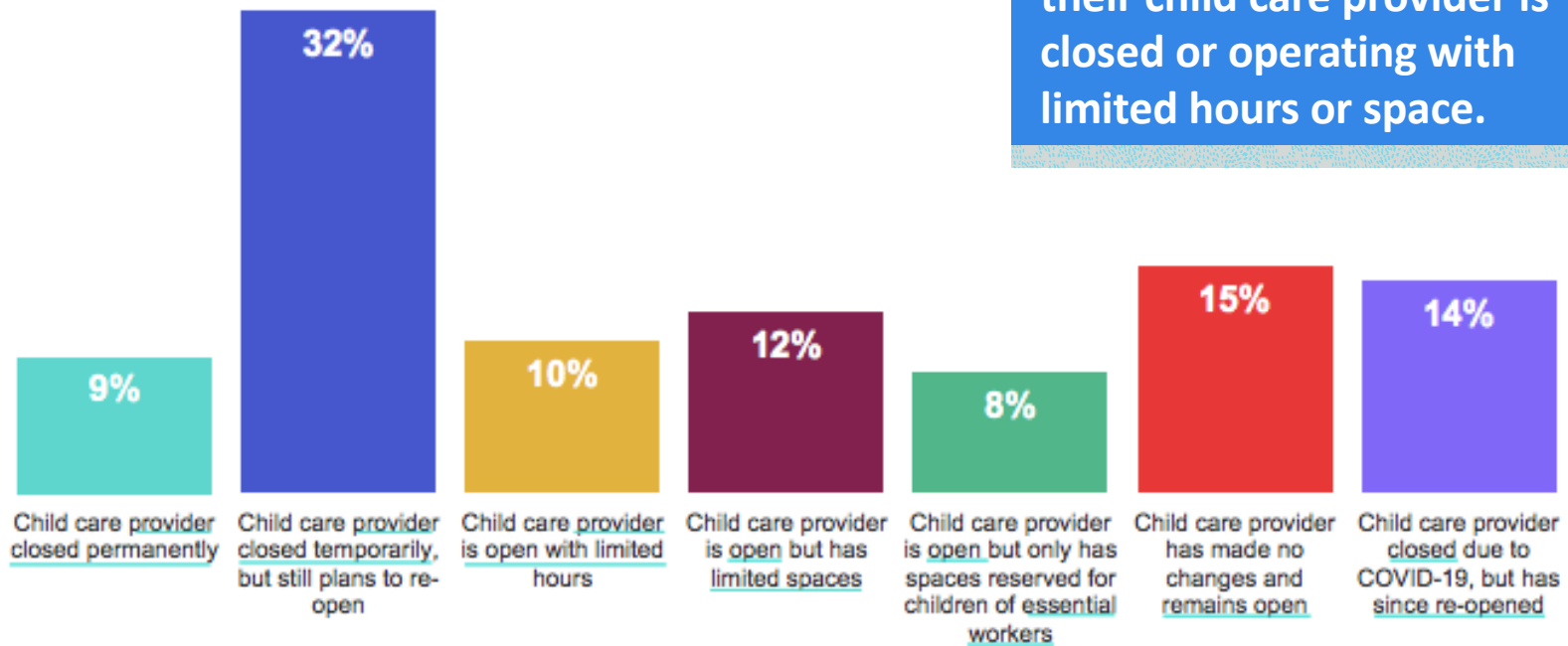


Impact of COVID-19 on Child Care Programs



Child Care Operating Status

Over 70% of parents report their child care provider is closed or operating with limited hours or space.



Centers vs. Home-Based Programs

Family-owned or individual child care centers:

- 14% of parents said their center closed permanently.
- 14% of parents said their center made no changes to their operating status.

Home-based programs:

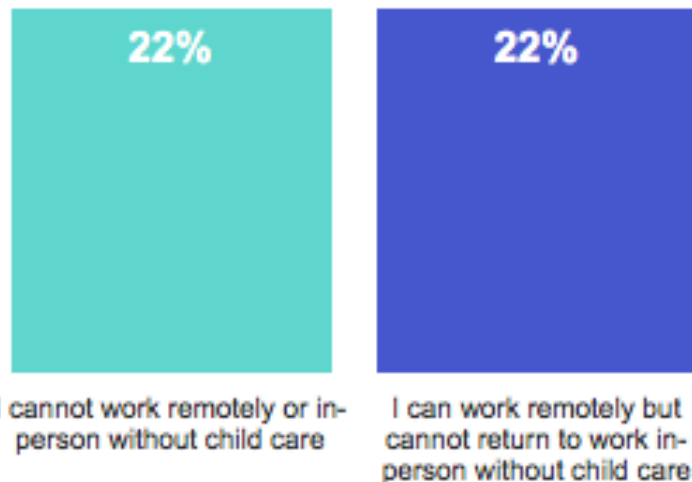
- 8% of parents said their programs closed permanently.
- 29% of parents said their programs made no changes to their operating status.

Nearly one-third of home-based programs have not changed their operating status during the pandemic, showing they are a resilient part of the child care landscape.



Parents' Work Status

44% of parents are unable to work in some form without child care.

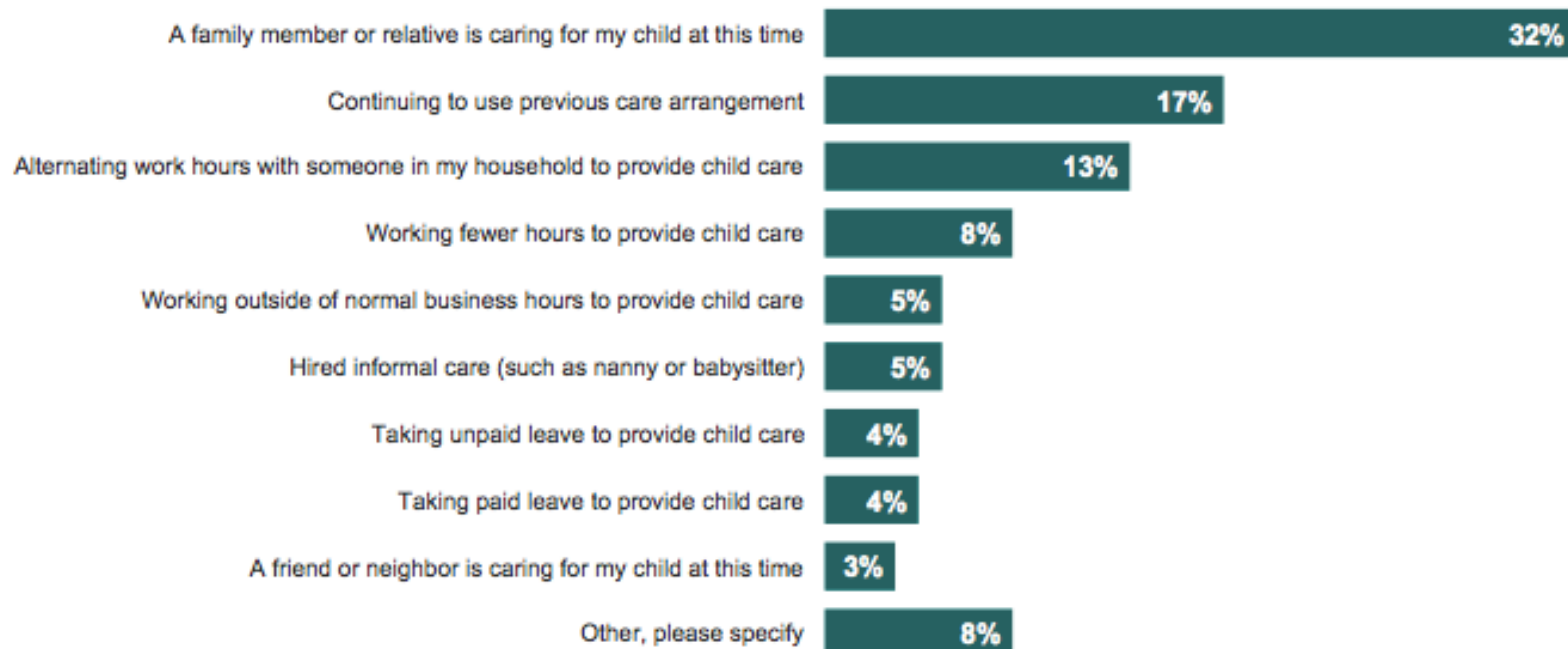


- 27% of parents with income less than \$35,000 say they cannot work in person or remotely without child care.
- 35% of Hispanic parents say they can work remotely but not in-person without child care.
- 38% of Black parents say they can work because they have a child care arrangement in their household.



Child Care Arrangements During COVID-19

A third of parents say a family member or relative is now caring for their children who were using a child care provider prior to COVID-19.



Child Care Arrangements During COVID-19

- 37% of parents who were not paying for care but in a formal child care program before the pandemic say a family member or relative is caring for their child at this time.
- Parents with incomes below \$50,000 who were using a formal child care program before the pandemic report they are more likely to rely on a family member or relative to provide care for their children during the pandemic.
- 24% of Black parents who were using a formal child care program before the pandemic are continuing to use their previous child care arrangement.





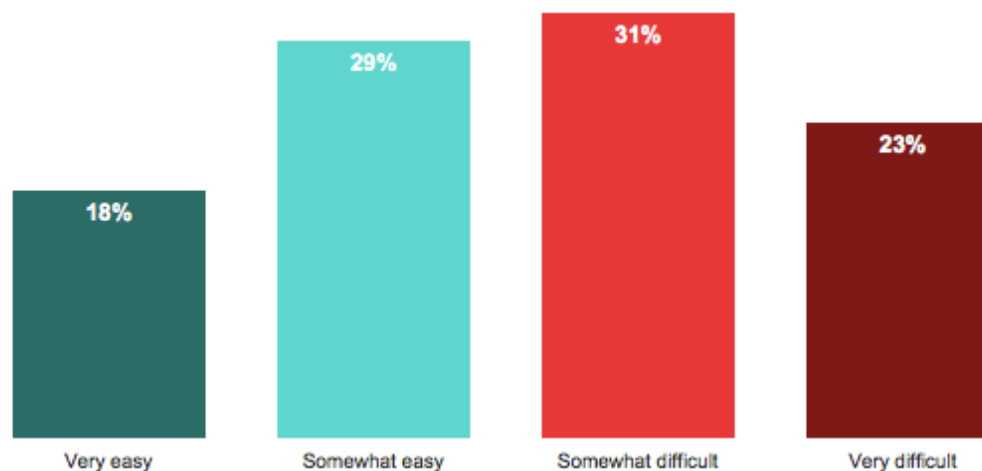
Child Care Needs During COVID-19



Searching for Child Care

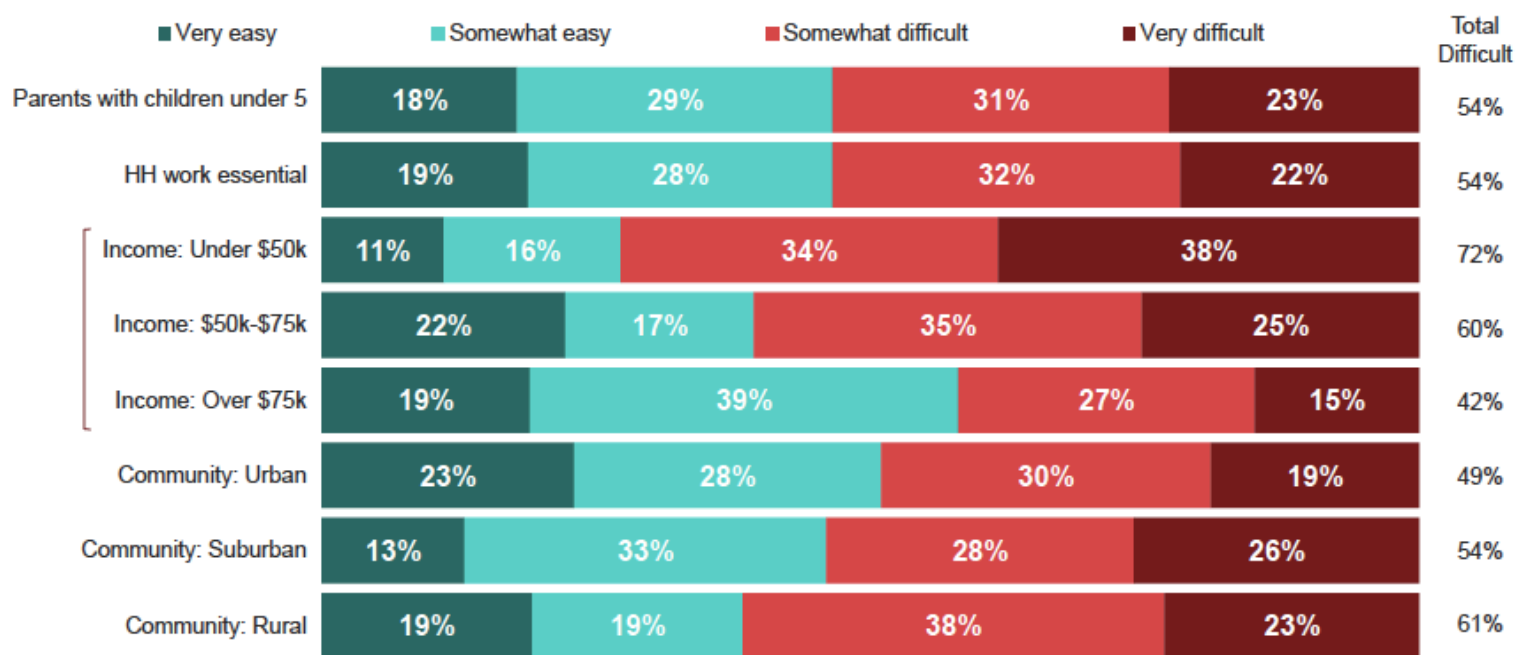
Nearly one-third of parents sought child care during the pandemic

- 54% of parents say it was difficult to find quality child care that fits within their budget.
- This includes 72% of parents with income under \$50,000.



Searching for Child Care

72% of parents with an income under \$50,000 say it was difficult to find child care during the pandemic.

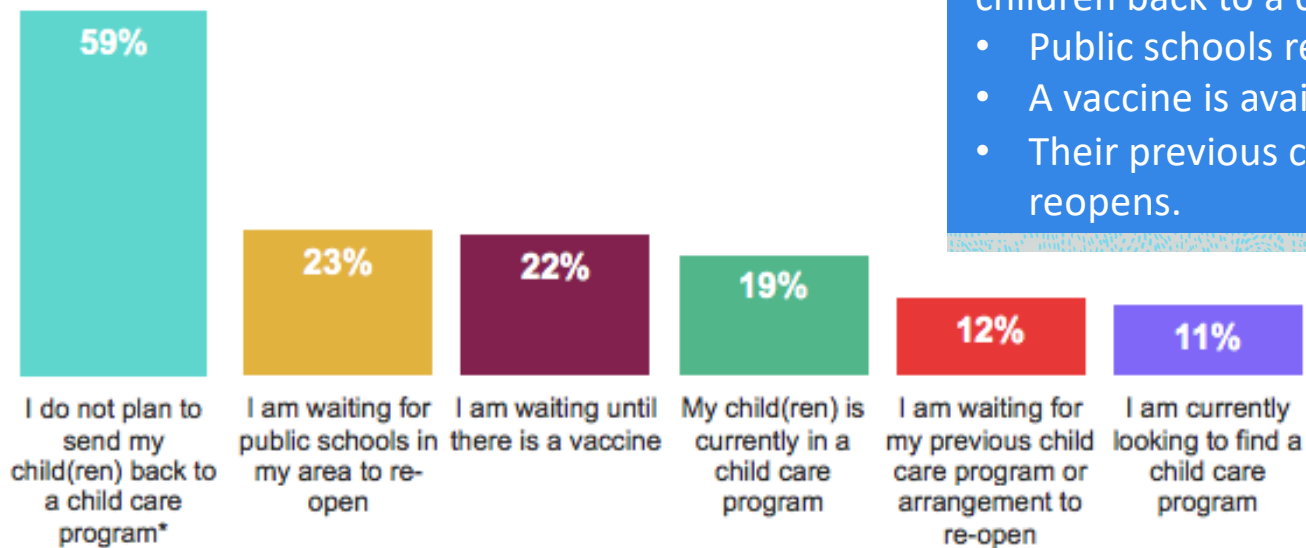


Returning to Child Care During COVID-19



Returning to Child Care

Parents are split on when they plan to send their children back to child care.



Many parents are waiting to send their children back to a child care program until:

- Public schools reopen.
- A vaccine is available.
- Their previous child care program reopens.



Returning to Child Care

Parents weigh the following factors as they consider returning to child care:

- Providing their children with opportunities for learning and development (91%)
- Concern about the coronavirus (85%)
- Providing their children with opportunities for socialization (84%)

66% of parents say “returning to work” is an important factor as they consider sending their children back to child care.



Returning to Child Care

Since you do not plan to send your child(ren) to a child care program, how do you plan to care for your child (or children)?

PARENTS WHO DO NOT PLAN TO SEND THEIR CHILD BACK TO A CHILD CARE PROGRAM (n=356)

Plan For Children Not Going Back to Child Care By Demographic Group			
	Parents	Multigenerational Household	Household of Essential Worker
My spouse, partner, or I will provide care	57%	49%	59%
I will have a family member or relative provide care	33%	42%	31%
I will have a friend or neighbor provide care	3%	1%	3%
I will use a nanny or other in-home provider	3%	4%	3%
I will share a nanny or other in-home provider with other families	1%	3%	2%
Other, please specify	3%	2%	3%



Child Care Preferences

When considering sending children back to child care—and if cost were not a factor—parents prefer family-owned/individual child care centers, family members or relatives, and home-based child care programs.

- 43% rank family-owned or individual family child care centers in the top 3.
- 53% rank a family member or relative in the top 3.
- 31% rank a home-based program in the top 3.



Child Care Preferences

When asked which child care arrangements parents are **most comfortable** with:

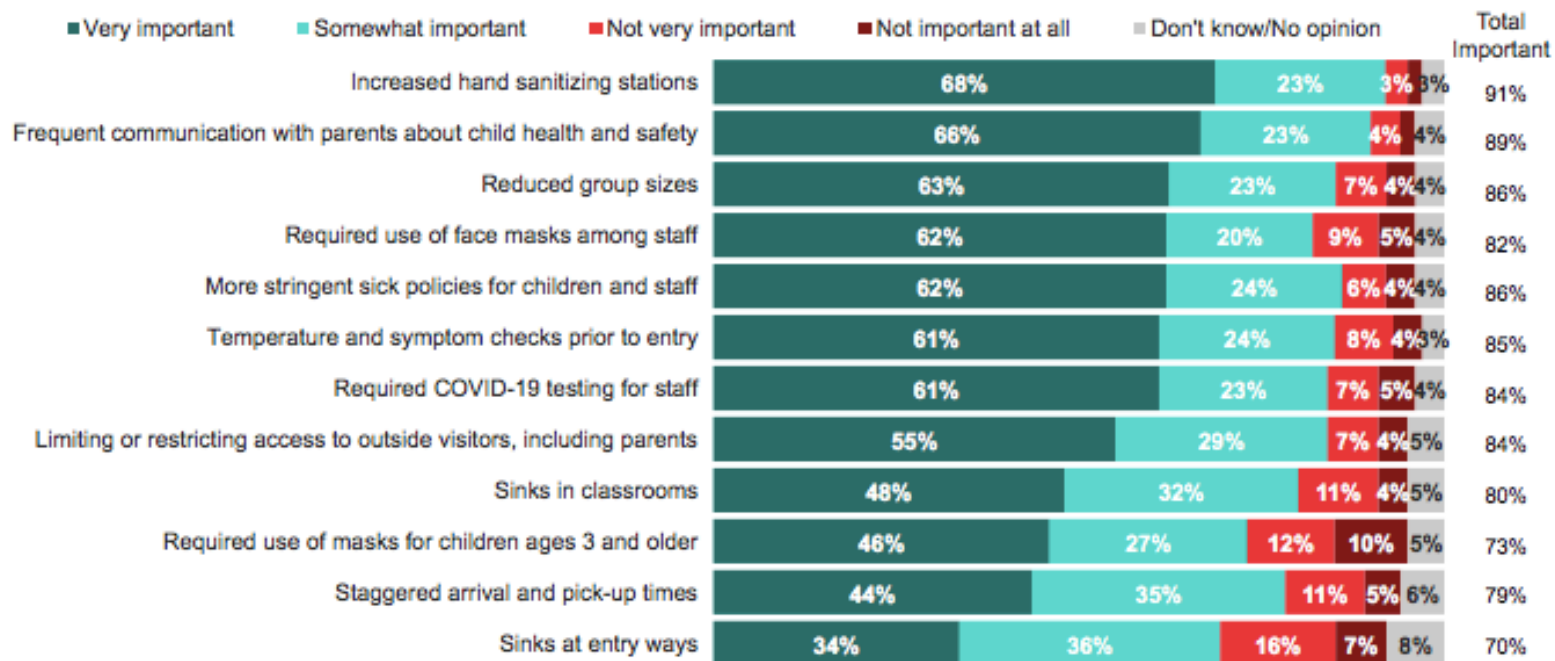
- 91% of parents selected a family member or relative
- 53% of parents are **not comfortable** sending their child to a child care center.

77% of parents are concerned that their child and family will be exposed to COVID-19 if they return to child care.



Health and Safety Measures

Health and safety measures in child care programs are important to a majority of parents.



Health and Safety Measures

When asked what is *most important* to parents in child care programs upon reopening, parents selected hand sanitizing, temperature checks, COVID-19 testing for staff, and required use of face masks for staff.



Parent Perspectives

What considerations are top of mind for you as you consider sending your children to a child care program amid the COVID-19 pandemic?

HEALTH & SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

“Ensure my children are at a safe facility where other children and my children are routinely checked. There should be safety measures, such as required masks & sanitization.”

VACCINE

“I'm really waiting for a vaccine. I know that children aren't going to keep their masks on. Therefore the virus could be spread the household causing like but not limited to grandparents and older people and etc.”

CONCERN OF SICKNESS

“Children are more likely to not follow guidelines to keep them from getting sick, and any adult caring for a small child absolutely has to get very close to them, etc. Kids will get one another sick, kids will get their caregivers sick, or caregivers will get kids sick.”

CHILDREN NOT RETURNING

“I live in an area that doesn't believe the pandemic is real even though it's getting worse. I will not send my child to a daycare where they could be exposed. It's just not a good move as a parent.”

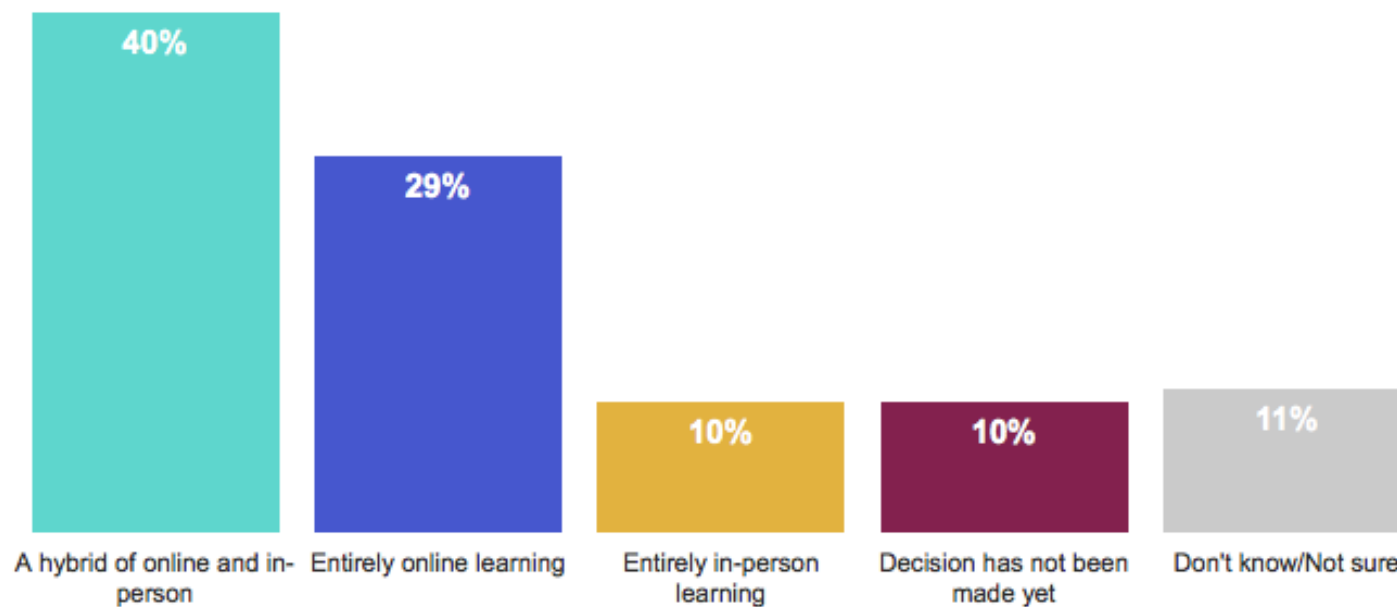


Considerations for School-Aged Children



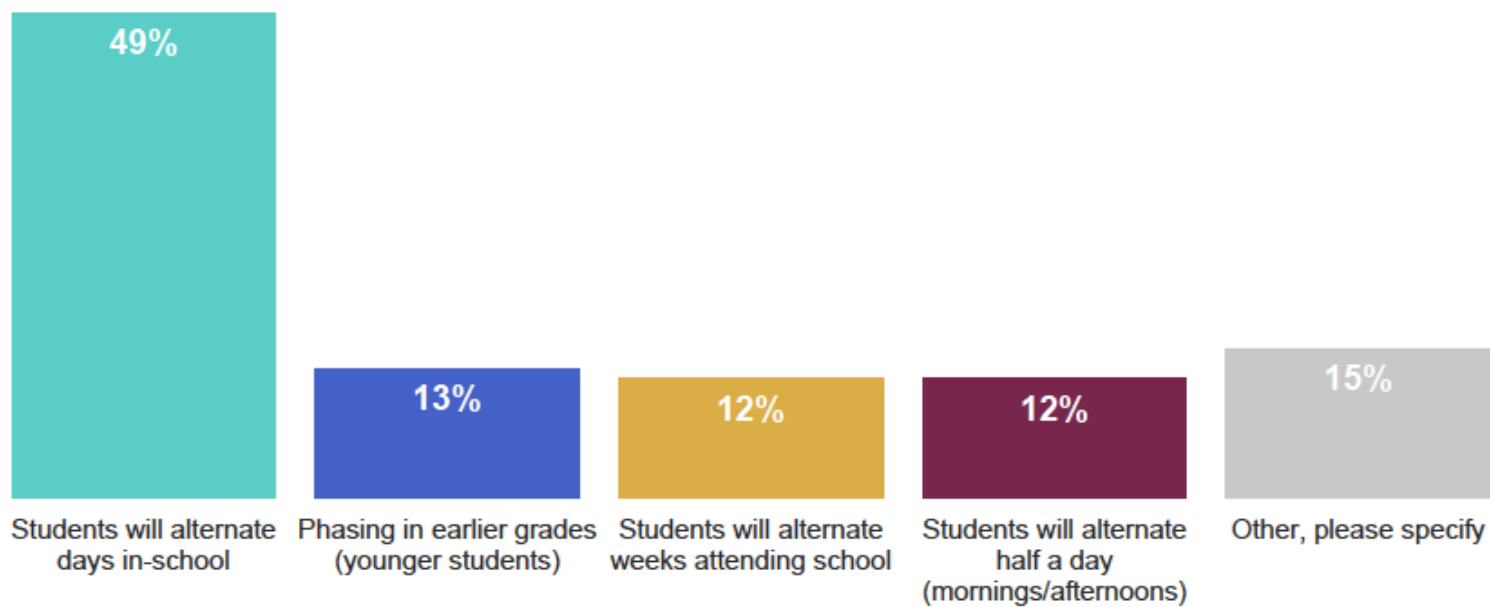
School-Aged Children

Two-thirds of the parents with school-aged children say their schools will require some type of online learning in the fall.



School-Aged Children

Among those whose school districts are using a hybrid model, half say students will alternate days in school.



School-Aged Children

Child Care for School-Aged Children

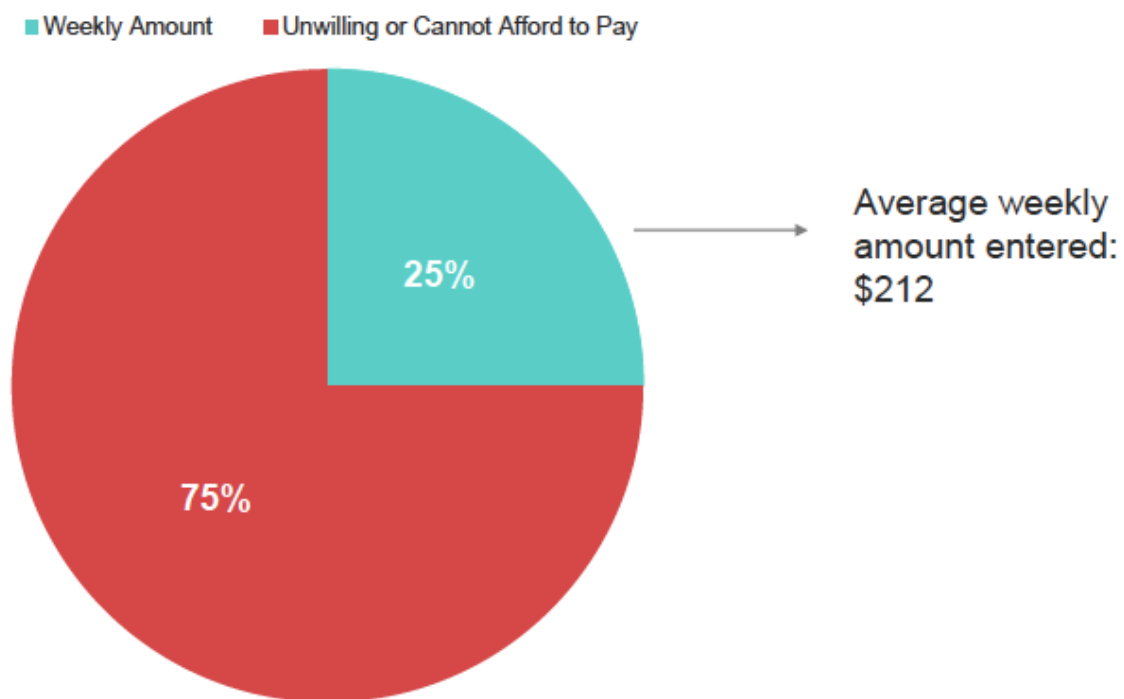
- 38% of parents with school-aged children say they will look for a child care provider if their school does not open in the fall.
- 39% of these parents would prefer a formal child care program or provider to care for their school-aged children.



School-Aged Children

Among those who would look for a child care provider for their school-aged children, 75% would be unable to afford or unwilling to pay for this type of care.

On average, 25% of parents say they are willing to pay \$212 weekly for child care for their school-aged children.





Discussion: Implications for Child Care



Implications for Child Care

70% of child care programs are either closed or operating at reduced capacity/times.

- Without support, programs have two choices: close or raise parent fees.
- Both have long-term consequences to our families, businesses, and our nation.

Parents are reluctant to send children back to child care anytime soon.

- To prevent catastrophic loss of child care infrastructure, financial support needs to be predictable and sustainable.

Based on school schedules, child care for school-age children will place an added burden on parents.

- 75% of parents will be unable to afford to pay for this type of care.
- This may result in more young children being left “home alone” so their parents can work.

School schedules have significant influence on parents’ decisions around child care and on parents’ ability to return to work.

- Community and state policymakers should ensure close collaboration between school leadership, business, and child care leaders.



More Information

BPC and Morning Consult Parent Surveys

- April 2020 | Child Care in the Time of Coronavirus
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/nationwide-survey-child-care-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>
- October 2019 | The Impact of Child Care Costs on Parents
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/child-care-poll/>



More Information

School-Age Child Care

- America Needs A Child Care Plan
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/america-needs-a-child-care-plan/>
- Letter to Congress on School-Age Child Care Needs
https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/21st-C-LTC_August.pdf

Child Care Facilities

- Child Care Infrastructure and COVID-19: A New Reality
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/child-care-infrastructure-and-covid-19-a-new-reality/>





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Questions?

Please ask your questions
in the “comment” box





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