Work is Changing: How Will It Impact Child Care?

Highlights from a new national survey of working parents

June 22, 2021
Goals of the May 2021 Parent Survey

• Understand parents’ current and preferred work arrangements
• Determine the use of child care beyond the traditional 8am to 6pm workday
• Clarify child care preferences for working families, especially for informal or parent-provided child care arrangements
• Understand the extent to which parents are concerned about their children’s social-emotional and behavioral health
BPC and Morning Consult have conducted a series of parent surveys to understand parents’ need and preferences for child care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 2019</td>
<td>The Impact of Child Care Costs on Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRIL 2020</td>
<td>Child Care in the Time of Coronavirus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 2020</td>
<td>Child Care in COVID-19: Another Look at Parents’ Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER 2020</td>
<td>Parent Child Care Preferences: Are They Changing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 2021</td>
<td>Work Is Changing: How Will it Impact Child Care</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Methodology

Survey Methodology

• Survey conducted online from May 20-31, 2021, among a national sample of 800 parents of children under age 5 and in households in which all available parents are employed.

• Results have a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

• For simplicity, respondents in this survey are referenced as parents.
A gig is a job that lasts a certain period of time. It can be short-term and specific in length, or long-term and lasting as long as the need from a company continues. Examples of a gig job can include driving for Uber, or delivering meals via GrubHub.

### Job Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Worker, Retail Sales, Laborers and Helpers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and Skilled Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Workers, Office Professionals, and Executive/Senior Level Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Medical Professionals, Lab Technicians, and Pharmacists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professionals</td>
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</table>
Parents’ Work Arrangements

Over half of parents (58%) report their employer allows them to work remotely. Of the 58% of parents who can work remotely, 81% do some type of remote work, whether full-time or a hybrid model.

Parents with income less than $50,000 are less likely to work remotely full-time, whereas higher income earners are more likely to work in a remote/onsite hybrid model.
Over half (60%) of all parents prefer some type of remote work option, whereas 37% of parents prefer working onsite full-time.

Thinking ahead, which of the following best describes your preferred work situation?

- Work on-site or in the office full-time: 37%
- Work in a 'hybrid' environment, both remotely and on-site: 31%
- Work remotely full-time: 29%
- Gig worker: 2%
- Other, please specify: 1%
Parents’ Work Arrangements

Over one-quarter (29%) of parents report they are made aware of their work schedules no more than 2 weeks in advance of working, and 42% of parents have a fixed work schedule.

Data show that Black parents and parents with low educational attainment and who earn less than $50,000 are more likely to be made aware of their work schedule no more than 2 weeks in advance of working.
Parents’ Work Arrangements

A majority of parents (57%) say child care responsibilities have impacted their ability to work over the past month.

In the past month, how frequently, if at all, has child care responsibilities impacted your ability to work or perform work-related tasks?

Three quarters of parents (73%) who say child care impacted their ability to work say they have missed over 8 hours in the last month due to child care responsibilities.
Current and Preferred Child Care Arrangements
Parents in need of child care during traditional work hours rely heavily on relatives, child care centers, and parent-provided care as their primary care arrangements.

Primary Child Care Arrangements During Traditional Work Hours

- Relatives: 27%
- Child Care Center: 23%
- Family Child Care Home: 12%
- Part-Day Pre-K: 10%
- Parent/Partner or Spouse: 23%
- Non-Relative Friend or Neighbor: 5%
Parents in need of child care outside of traditional work hours rely heavily on relatives, and parent-provided care as their primary care arrangements. 29% of parents report needing child care outside of traditional work hours (or between 6pm and 8am).
People need care outside of traditional work hours in the evening (49% need care from 6pm-8pm).
Children’s Social Emotional Development
Two-thirds of parents report their children’s overall development has negatively changed over the last month, with one-quarter of parents reporting negative changes to their child’s eating habits and ability to follow rules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily eating habits</th>
<th>24%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to follow rules</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of sleep nightly</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily physical activity</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention span</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to regulate emotions</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily levels of stress and anxiety</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents in urban communities are more likely to report negative impacts to their children’s development than parents in suburban and rural communities.
8% of parents say their child has been suspended or expelled from child care because of behavioral or disciplinary issues.

Parents in urban communities are more likely to report their child had been suspended or expelled from child care than parents in suburban communities.
Three quarters (76%) of parents would be interested in a social and emotional health consultations if made available by their primary child care arrangement.
Supports for Affording Child Care
Half (47%) of parents say the maximum amount their household can afford to pay per child per week for child care is less than $200.

67% of service and retail workers report the maximum they can afford for child care is less than $200 per week.
Nearly half (42%) of parents say they have received a federal tax credit for their child care expenses. While 51% said they have not, 7% of parents do not know if they have received it or not.

One-quarter (24%) of parents who said they did not receive the credit were not aware that they could.
Supports for Affording Child Care

Parents are divided on whether they would most prefer to receive financial support for their child care expenses via tax refunds (39%) or through both government subsidies and tax refunds (39%).
Operating Status of Child Care Programs
Thinking about the primary child care arrangement for your youngest child prior to the pandemic, what best describes their current operating status?

- Child care provider is open without any changes to hours or capacity: 29%
- Child care provider is open with limited hours: 19%
- Child care provider is open but has limited spaces: 16%
- Child care provider closed temporarily with plans to re-open: 15%
- Child care provider has closed permanently: 10%
- Child care provider is open but only has spaces reserved for children of essential workers: 5%
- Unsure: 5%
Child Care and Pre-K Preferences
Preferred Child Care Arrangements

If child care were free for their family, a plurality of parents (30%) say that they would prefer the child care arrangement they currently use.

If child care were free for your family, what type of child care arrangement would you most prefer?

**Child Care Arrangements They Would Most Prefer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Child Care Arrangements During Traditional Work Hours</th>
<th>Child Care Center</th>
<th>Family Child Care Home</th>
<th>Part-day Pre-K Program</th>
<th>Head Start Program</th>
<th>Relative (e.g. grandparent, aunt/uncle)</th>
<th>I provided care for my child</th>
<th>My spouse/partner provided care for our child</th>
<th>My spouse/partner and I alternated providing care for our child</th>
<th>Non-relative friend or neighbor</th>
<th>Non-live-in nanny or nanny share</th>
<th>Other, please specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Used Child Care Center</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Use Family Child Care Home</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Use Part-Day Preschool/preK</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Use Relatives</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three quarters of parents (73%) say that if public pre-k were co-located in a child care program that offered longer hours of care, it would be a better option for their family.

Urban parents (77%) are more likely than suburban (71%) and rural parents (68%) to say this would be a better option for their family.

If free public pre-k were co-located in a child care program that offered longer hours of care, would this be a better option for your family?
Support for Working Parents

A strong majority of parents agree with the statements that working parents deserve access to high quality child care (92%) and that expanding government support would be beneficial for parents and children (88%).

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Don't know/No opinion
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Total Agree**

- Although parents may prefer to stay home with their young children, many do not have that option as they must work to support their family. These working parents deserve access to high-quality child care.
  - 65%
  - 27%
  - 4%
  - 92%

- Expanding government support to make quality child care affordable for low- and middle-income working families would be beneficial for both parents and their children.
  - 58%
  - 30%
  - 5%
  - 88%
Respondent Demographics
Respondent Profile

GENDER

- Male: 40%
- Female: 60%

EDUCATION

- < College: 38%
- Bachelors degree: 36%
- Post-grad: 27%

ETHNICITY

- White: 82%
- Hispanic: 10%
- Black: 8%
- Other: 9%

AGE

- 18-34: 50%
- 35-44: 44%
- 45-64+: 6%

INCOME

- Under $50k: 24%
- $50k-100k: 41%
- Over $100k: 36%

COMMUNITY TYPE

- Urban: 36%
- Suburban: 46%
- Rural: 18%
Employment Demographics

**RESPONDENT JOB CLASSIFICATIONS**

- Administrative Workers, Office Professionals, and Executive/Senior Level Managers: 42%
- Other Professionals: 21%
- Service Worker, Retail Sales, Laborers and Helpers: 18%
- Health Care and Medical Professionals, Lab Technicians, and Pharmacists: 11%
- Trade and Skilled Workers: 8%

**SPOUSE/PARTNER JOB CLASSIFICATIONS**

- Administrative Workers, Office Professionals, and Executive/Senior Level Managers: 33%
- Other Professionals: 22%
- Service Worker, Retail Sales, Laborers and Helpers: 20%
- Health Care and Medical Professionals, Lab Technicians, and Pharmacists: 17%
- Trade and Skilled Workers: 8%

**RESPONDENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION**

- Employed and salaried: 55%
- Employed and paid hourly (including gig work): 38%
- Self employed: 7%

**SPOUSE/PARTNER EMPLOYMENT SITUATION**

- Employed and salaried: 58%
- Employed and paid hourly (including gig work): 32%
- Self employed: 10%
Discussion: How Do Changing Work Arrangements Impact Child Care?
Discussion

• The need for child care in the evening time is clear, but it falls outside of traditional hours for many child care programs. What are the implications on the child care system?

• One-in-five parents in which all available parents in the household are working rely on themselves or their spouse for child care. How does this impact what we know about the child care gap facing many communities?

• We’ve learned many parents aren’t aware of their work schedules far enough in advance of working, and a large number of parents say child care responsibilities hinder their work. What role does the child care system play in supporting these parents? What can employers do?

Please ask your questions in the “comment” box