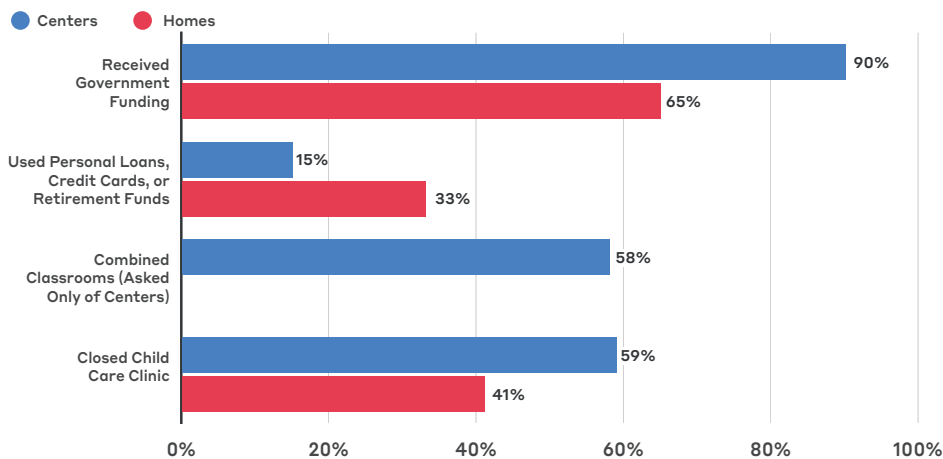


Child Care Programs in New Hampshire

A study conducted by the Bipartisan Policy Center finds that the COVID-19 relief packages passed by Congress was a lifeline for struggling U.S. child care programs. Nearly all child care providers in the 11-state survey reported using the funds to keep their businesses open during the pandemic. Key findings for New Hampshire are highlighted below.

Strategies Used by Child Care Centers/Homes in New Hampshire During the Pandemic



Top 3 Reasons Centers Closed

- Other (37%)
- Loss of Enrollment (24%)
- Government Requirement (18%)

Top 3 Reasons Homes Closed

- Loss of Enrollment (43%)
- Covid Exposure/Illness (29%)
- Government Requirement (14%)

Top 3 Reasons Centers Combined Classrooms

- Loss of Enrollment (47%)
- Loss of Teachers, Unable to Hire Replacements (24%)
- Other (15%)

About six in ten (59%) child care centers and 41% of family child care homes (FCC) in New Hampshire closed at some point during the pandemic with homes closing for longer, on average (154 days), compared to centers (70 days). Both centers and homes cited loss of enrollment (24% and 43% respectively), government requirements (18% of centers and 14% of homes), while homes mentioned COVID illness/exposure (29%) as the top three reasons for closing.

Additionally, 58% of centers combined classrooms. Forty-seven percent of centers combined classrooms due to loss of enrollment and 24% did so due to loss

of teachers who they could not replace. About 15% of centers and 33% of homes reported the use of personal loans, credit cards, or retirement funds to stay afloat.

Most child care centers (90%) and homes (65%) reported receiving government relief. On average, centers received \$283,748 (median \$100,000) and homes received \$13,556 (median \$12,196) to continue operating. Centers reported spending the money to pay teachers, pay the rent/mortgage, or to pay for facility maintenance or modification, while homes mainly spent the money to pay rent/mortgage, pay for facility maintenance or modification, and to pay assistants.

Uses of Government Relief Funding for Centers and Homes in New Hampshire

	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care Homes
Pay Teachers and Other Classroom Staff	58%	N/A
Pay Other Essential Support Staff (Centers)/ Assistants (Homes)	5%	9%
Pay Rent/Mortgage	16%	43%
Pay for Facility Maintenance or Modifications	8%	17%
Pay for Personal Protective Equipment	5%	14%
Create Socially Distanced Space for Children and Staff	3%	8%
Start/Resume Mental Health Services to Children and Staff	<1%	0%
Pay for Activities	4%	8%

THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT

Enrollment: In New Hampshire, between March 2020 and May 2022, enrollment in centers declined by 48.97% but increased by 10.55% in homes. Enrollment declined across all age groups among centers and but only among 3- to 5-year-olds in homes.

Enrollment in Centers and Homes in New Hampshire

Centers				
	Mar - 20	May - 22	Change	% Change
Infants/Toddler (Birth-2)	31.00	29.80	-1.20	-3.88%
3 to 5 Years Old	44.61	43.33	-1.28	-2.86%
Before and After School (School-Age)	10.15	4.20	-5.95	-58.61%
Total Capacity	77.33	39.46	-37.87	-48.97%

Homes				
	Mar - 20	May - 22	Change	% Change
Infants/Toddler (Birth-2)	1.31	1.92	0.6	47.06%
3 to 5 Years Old	3.92	3.77	-0.2	-3.92%
Before and After School (School-Age)	1.31	1.54	0.2	17.65%
Total Capacity	6.54	7.23	0.7	10.55%

Staffing: In New Hampshire, between March 2020 and May 2022, there was a decline in the number of teaching staff. These declines were most pronounced among center directors and assistant directors.

Average Number of Staff

	Mar - 20	May - 22	Change	% Change
Lead Teacher	8.19	7.31	-0.88	-10.70%
Assistant Teacher	12.08	10.78	-1.30	-10.79%
Center Director or Assistant Director	2.03	1.70	-0.33	-16.37%
Other staff	0.60	0.81	0.21	35.81%

Methodology of 11-State Survey:

The Bipartisan Policy Center worked with Well World Solutions to conduct a survey of child care centers and family child care homes in 11 states to better understand how child care programs weathered the COVID-19 pandemic and how they used the federal government's pandemic-related stimulus funding. The survey was fielded from June 14-30, 2022. The MOE was +/- 21% for centers and +/-23% for homes in New Hampshire. For more information on the methodology, see the full report.

In May 2022, the average number of openings in centers was 4.67 for lead teachers and 3.42 for assistant teachers. The table below provides more detail.

Average Number of Openings in Centers in New Hampshire

Lead Teachers	
Total	4.67
Infant/Toddler	2.05
3- to 5- Year Olds	1.65
Before and After School	0.96

Assistant Teachers	
Total	3.42
Infant/Toddler	1.79
3- to 5- Year Olds	1.51
Before and After School	0.12

Total Openings	
Infant/Toddler	3.84
3- to 5- Year Olds	3.16
Before and After School	1.09

Top strategies used by centers to hire new staff or retain current staff included offering part-time or flexible schedules, higher wages, and child tuition discounts or waivers for staff. Their biggest competitor for staff was pre-kindergarten or preschool programs.

About four in ten home-based providers (38%) have staff – half of them (50%) said hiring staff was “very difficult” and 33% gave that response for retaining staff.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic exposed fundamental flaws in the child care market. COVID-19 relief funding kept the child care market afloat, but as we emerge from the pandemic, we must address the flaws in the business model so that child care can survive, and our economy can fully recover. We need to examine the true cost of child care and determine how to ensure the country has a stable, high-quantity system that meets the needs of all concerned—parents, children, businesses, and our early education system. Child care provides a public good. Congress and our nation need to ensure every parent has access to safe, affordable, quality child care.