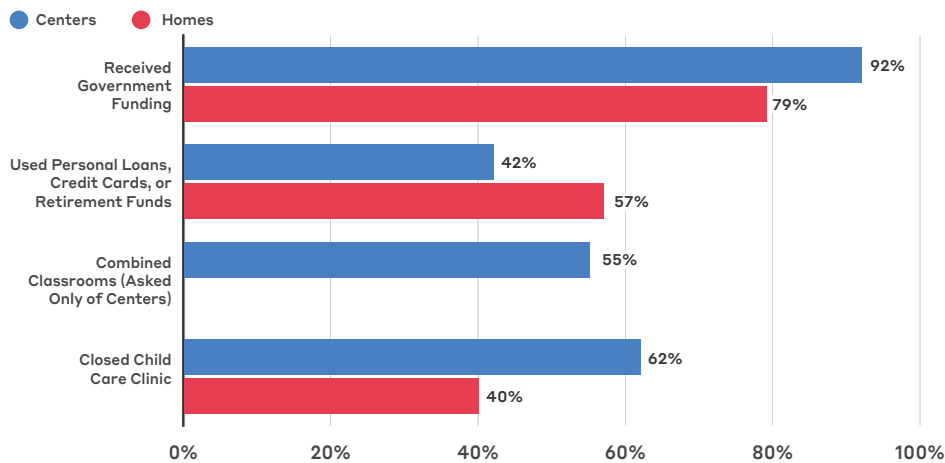


SURVIVING THE PANDEMIC

# Child Care Programs in Ohio

A study conducted by the Bipartisan Policy Center finds that the COVID-19 relief packages passed by Congress were 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 Ohio are highlighted below.

### Strategies Used by Child Care Centers/Homes in Ohio During the Pandemic



### Top 3 Reasons Centers Closed

- Government Requirement (76%)
- Loss of Teachers, Unable to Hire Replacements (6%)
- Loss of Enrollment (5%)

### Top 3 Reasons Homes Closed

- Government Requirement (78%)
- Covid Exposure/Illness (8%)
- Loss of Enrollment (6%)

### Top 3 Reasons Centers Combined Classrooms

- Loss of Enrollment (45%)
- Loss of Teachers, Unable to Hire Replacements (28%)
- Loss of Support Staff, Unable to Hire Replacements (15%)

About six in ten (62%) child care centers and 40% of family child care homes (FCC) in Ohio closed at some point during the pandemic with homes closing for longer, on average (101 days), compared to centers that closed (71 days). Both centers and homes cited government requirements (76% and 78% respectively), loss of enrollment (5% and 6% respectively), and centers cited loss of teachers and being unable to replace them (6%) while homes gave COVID illness/exposure (8%) as the top three reasons for closing.

Additionally, 55% of centers reported combining classes due to loss of enrollment (45%), loss of teachers and

being unable to replace them (28%), and loss of other support staff and being unable to replace them (15%) as their main reasons for doing so. About 42% of centers and 57% of homes reported the use of personal loans, credit cards, or retirement funds to stay afloat.

Most centers (92%) and homes (79%) reported receiving government relief funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, centers received \$82,258 (median \$40,000) and homes received \$9,534 (median \$5,550) to help them to continue operating. Centers mostly reported spending the money to pay teachers, pay the rent/mortgage, or to pay for personal protective

### Uses of Government Relief Funding for Centers and Homes in Ohio

	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care Homes
Pay Teachers and Other Classroom Staff	53%	N/A
Pay Other Essential Support Staff (Centers)/ Assistants (Homes)	4%	10%
Pay Rent/Mortgage	21%	41%
Pay for Facility Maintenance or Modifications	5%	14%
Pay for Personal Protective Equipment	9%	18%
Create Socially Distanced Space for Children and Staff	5%	6%
Start/Resume Mental Health Services to Children and Staff	1%	<1%
Pay for Activities	3%	10%

equipment, while homes mainly spent the money to pay rent/mortgage, for facility maintenance or modification, and for personal protective equipment.

## THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT

**Enrollment:** In Ohio, between March 2020 and May 2022, enrollment decreased by 21.63% in centers and 18.27% in homes. The decline among enrollment in centers was most pronounced among before-and-after care for school children (-29.39%). In homes, enrollment also declined most steeply for before-and-after care for school children (-23.88%).

### Enrollment in Centers and Homes in Ohio

Centers				
	Mar - 20	May - 22	Change	% Change
<b>Infants/Toddler (Birth-2)</b>	20.43	16.62	-3.80	-18.62%
<b>3 to 5 Years Old</b>	31.57	25.98	-5.60	-17.73%
<b>Before and After School (School-Age)</b>	23.84	16.83	-7.01	-29.39%
<b>Total Capacity</b>	75.84	59.43	-16.41	-21.63%

Homes				
	Mar - 20	May - 22	Change	% Change
<b>Infants/Toddler (Birth-2)</b>	2.20	1.96	-0.2	-10.89%
<b>3 to 5 Years Old</b>	3.43	2.86	-0.6	-16.88%
<b>Before and After School (School-Age)</b>	3.73	2.84	-0.9	-23.88%
<b>Total Capacity</b>	9.36	7.65	-1.7	-18.27%

**Staffing:** In Ohio, between March 2020 and May 2022, there was a decline in the number of teaching and other staff. These declines were most pronounced among assistant teachers.

### Average Number of Staff

	Mar - 20	May - 22	Change	% Change
<b>Lead Teacher</b>	6.48	5.47	-1.00	-15.46%
<b>Assistant Teacher</b>	6.32	4.86	-1.46	-23.13%
<b>Center Director or Assistant Director</b>	1.62	1.43	-0.18	-11.32%
<b>Other staff</b>	1.29	0.88	-0.14	-31.45%

#### 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 +/- 8% for centers and +/- 6% for homes in Ohio. For more information on the methodology, see the full report.

In May 2022, the average number of openings in centers was 2.60 for lead teachers and 3 for assistant teachers. The table below provides more details.

### Average Number of Openings in Centers in Ohio

Lead Teachers	
<b>Total</b>	2.60
<b>Infant/Toddler</b>	0.85
<b>3- to 5- Year Olds</b>	0.95
<b>Before and After School</b>	0.81

Assistant Teachers	
<b>Total</b>	3.00
<b>Infant/Toddler</b>	1.20
<b>3- to 5- Year Olds</b>	1.14
<b>Before and After School</b>	0.66

Total Openings	
<b>Infant/Toddler</b>	2.05
<b>3- to 5- Year Olds</b>	2.08
<b>Before and After School</b>	1.47

Strategies used by centers hiring new staff included, offering higher wages, child tuition discounts or waivers for staff, and flexible schedules. For retaining staff, centers offered higher wages, child tuition discounts or waivers for staff and retention bonuses. Their biggest competitor for staff was retail stores like Amazon, Walmart, grocery stores, etc.

About three in ten home-based providers (31%) have staff – about half of them (48%) said hiring staff was “very difficult” and 31% 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 costs 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 education system. Child care provides a public good. Congress and our nation needs to ensure every parent has access to safe, affordable, quality child care.