

For Immediate Release

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Survey home: <https://www.naeyc.org/ece-workforce-surveys>

State-specific data: <https://www.naeyc.org/state-survey-briefs-2024>

NAEYC Survey Shows Child Care Crisis Worsening After Federal Funding Expired

~ Survey of more than 10,000 child care providers nationwide shows deepening uncertainty and instability in early education sector ~

WASHINGTON (February 25, 2024)—A [new survey](#) by the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (NAEYC) of more than 10,000 early childhood educators across the country reveals an early childhood education system in crisis because of expired federal stabilization funding in fall 2023.

More than half (53%) of center directors and family child care owner/operators reported staffing shortages in their programs, with 68% of those working in child care centers experiencing shortages.

"The loss of federal funds that helped the early childhood sector weather the pandemic has exacerbated long-standing challenges like low wages and high operating costs, leading to staff shortages, program closures, and rising family tuition rates," said Michelle Kang, NAEYC CEO. "The results make it clear—significant public investment in child care is needed urgently to ensure programs can retain qualified educators and remain open to serve children and families."

In addition to [state-specific data](#), other key findings include:

- 56% of center directors and family child care owner/operators said they were under-enrolled relative to their current capacity, with the reasons varying from staffing shortages (89%), low pay (77%), and lack of affordability for families (66%).
- 55% of all respondents were aware of at least one child care program closing in their community in the past six months, while only 30% were aware of a new program opening. 11% said four or more programs had closed in their community in that time.
- 36% of center directors and family child care owner/operators reported increased rent costs and half reported increased insurance costs over the past 6 months. To cover costs, 48% increased tuition rates for families.
- 46% of all respondents reported increased burnout since January 2023. 32% said their economic situation has worsened, compared to only 16% who said it has improved.

Furthermore, in 11 states and Washington, DC, where additional state-level investments were made, respondents less often reported raising tuition in the last 6 months (35% compared to 45% in all other states) and less often reported that their program wait list had grown (24% compared to 31%).

The survey, conducted in January 2024, included early childhood educators from all states and settings, including faith-based programs, family child care homes, Head Starts, and child care centers.

In its [policy brief on the survey](#), NAEYC calls on federal and state policymakers to learn from the success of previous investments and commit to building a stronger early childhood education system through substantial, sustained public funding.

The survey's release coincides with NAEYC's 2024 virtual Public Policy Forum, where nearly 800 early childhood educators, providers, parents, and advocates from across the country will spend two days in workshops and trainings before having the opportunity to connect directly with their elected leaders and staff.

The full NAEYC survey brief can be found at www.naeyc.org/ece-workforce-surveys.

Methodology

This online survey, created and conducted by NAEYC using SurveyMonkey, represents the responses of a non-randomized sample of 11,154 individuals working in early childhood education settings who completed the survey in English or Spanish between January 8-22, 2024. To generate a more representative national sample from the pool of responses, a probability proportional to size (PPS) methodology was used to pull samples by state that are benchmarked to the share of the total early childhood workforce by state. These shares were calculated by the authors from the Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2022 Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (Codes: 11-9031, 25-2011, 25-2051, 39-9011— (<https://stats.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm>)). The final sample size for analysis is 10,128. The respondents represent providers in 50 states as well as Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico; 14% report that they work in family child care homes while 50.2% report that they work in center-based child care. Others work in public school preK and Head Start. The survey links were shared widely through email newsletters, listservs, social media, and via partnerships, and 10 randomly selected respondents were provided with a \$100 gift card and another 10 randomly selected respondents were provided complimentary registration to NAEYC's February 2024 Public Policy Forum for participation in a sweepstakes. Additional focused briefs and state-by-state analysis will be available, along with previous NAEYC survey briefs, at www.NAEYC.org/ece-workforce-surveys.

About NAEYC

[The National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. The association comprises nearly 60,000 individual members of the early childhood community and more than 50 Affiliates, all committed to delivering on the promise of high-quality early learning. Together, we work to achieve a collective vision: that all young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.

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