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**SURVEY: Chronic Child Care Staffing Shortages Persist, Threaten Economy**

*Long-term federal investment is needed to secure the future of early education programs in all settings, including large centers, small family providers, and faith-based programs*

WASHINGTON (February 25, 2022)—Child care providers across the country continue to struggle to stay open and meet the needs of families, children, and the American economy, according to a [new survey](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/user-98/naeyc_ece_field_survey_february2022.pdf) of nearly 5,000 industry respondents from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a leading advocate for high-quality early childhood education.

According to the survey, two-thirds of respondents reported experiencing a staffing shortage that affected their ability to serve families; 52% of those with staffing shortages were forced to serve fewer children while 37% had a longer waiting list.

“In the face of extraordinary labor challenges across the U.S. economy, low compensation for early childhood educators remains the primary driver of this severe child care staffing crisis, which leads to closed classrooms, disruptions in quality, and longer waiting lists, perpetuating unemployment for parents,” said NAEYC CEO Rhian Evans Allvin. “This is an immediate economic challenge that requires an immediate public solution.”

The poll showed that keeping child care providers open will require urgent, long-term investment.

* 75% of respondents reported that the end of stabilization grants would have a negative or highly negative effect on their programs.
* Of the respondents who said they knew enough about Build Back Better’s investments in child care and preK to answer the question, 89% agreed that it would “secure the future of our program,” including 86% of respondents from family child care homes and 85% of respondents from faith-based programs.
* 28% of respondents reported that they are definitely or maybe considering leaving their program or closing their child care home in 2022. This comes on top of [recent findings](https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/FINAL-Demanding%20Change%20Report-020322.pdf#:~:text=Demanding%20Change%3ARepairing%20Our%20Child%20Care%20System%204%20Child,sustainable%20solutions%20is%20needed%20to%20transform%20child%20care.) from Child Care Aware of America indicating that between December 2019 and March 2021—during the pandemic but before ARP funds started to go out—8,889 child care centers and 6,957 licensed family child care homes were permanently closed.

The survey also showed that stabilization grants provided through the American Rescue Plan were critical in helping child care facilities stay open, including during the recent COVID-19 Omicron wave, even if providers were simultaneously unable to serve all families who needed care.

* 60% of respondents worked in child care centers and family child care homes that received stabilization grants through the American Rescue Plan; these programs alone reported serving more than 220,000 families across the United States.
* **Of those who received stabilization grants, 92% said that the grants helped their program stay open.**
* Only 15% of respondents said they had not received stabilization grants through the American Rescue Plan, either because their state had not made the grants available at the time of the survey, or because their programs hadn’t applied or weren’t eligible. Because many of the survey respondents are front-line educators, 27% weren’t sure if the relief they had received were stabilization grants.

Those stabilization grants were used to help increase compensation, pay off debt, and help families save money on child care costs.

* Nearly half (46%) of providers reported using child care relief to pay off debt they took on in the course of the pandemic, including 63% of those in family child care homes.
* In an attempt to combat the challenges that result from low compensation, 75% of respondents reported that their programs had used the funds to support compensation for educators; 53% provided increases through bonuses and 38% also reported an increase in baseline pay (some programs utilized both strategies).
* Half of survey respondents (51%) also indicated that they had used their program stabilization funds to help some or all of the families in their program save money on the costs of care.

“It is clear from what these providers are telling us that while stabilization funds have worked in the short term to keep their programs open, long-term substantial investments are imperative to prevent future collapse,” Evans Allvin said. “It’s a simple message that lawmakers need to hear: Support child care, help American families, and grow the American economy.”

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**Survey Methodology:** This survey was created and conducted by NAEYC using SurveyMonkey and represents the responses of a non-randomized sample of 4,987 individuals working in early childhood education settings who completed the survey between January 6-24, 2021. The respondents represent providers in 50 states as well as Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico; 28% report that they work in family child care homes while 53% 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 for participation in a sweepstakes. Given the constantly changing and widely varying nature of the crisis, the analysis from this survey is intended to present the experiences of the respondents, as captured in the moment that they take the survey, with extrapolations for the experiences of the field and industry at large.

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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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