

Uncertainty Ahead Means Instability Now

Why Families, Children, Educators, Businesses, and States Need Congress to Fund Child Care

December 2022

TEXAS



The problems are clear: Families can't find or afford child care because compensation is too low to attract and retain early childhood educators. As federal relief dollars that have saved the sector from complete collapse begin to dry up, the stability those dollars brought to programs will disappear with the funding.

The solutions are clear: The public benefits from public investments in child care and early learning. Congress needs to build on the successes of child care funding to prioritize additional, sustainable investments that ensure programs and educators can meet the needs of families, children, and businesses, and states can continue to build towards an early childhood education system that works.

In October 2022, more than 12,000 early childhood educators from all states and settings—including faith-based programs, family child care homes, Head Starts, and child care centers—responded to a new ECE field survey from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The results of this survey continue to show that relief helped, but uncertainty about the future is impacting the present.

Here are some reflections from survey respondents in Texas:

“What concerns me the most about the end of stabilization grants is being able to give early childhood educators the resources, tools, and funds that we desperately need to help provide quality care every day without feeling burnt out or having to get multiple jobs to make a living due to inflation.”—Early childhood educator

“Due to stabilization grants we were able to give our employees a bonus based upon their service time during the pandemic. This was a great surprise for our teachers and administrators. We do the best we can to support one another through the turbulence of life.”—Program Director/Administrator

“The grants had the biggest impact for our teachers. We were able to stay open and the teachers did not suffer income loss when many others did. It also helped us to increase wages as costs due to inflation rose. A continued effort for wage/ salary increase is needed for the ECE professionalism to be recognized.”—Program Director/Administrator

“Hiring staff has become almost impossible. Teachers can find easier work with a better schedule and pay elsewhere. If these stabilization grants do not continue, then we will not be able to retain staff. Without staff, we close. It is that simple. If these grants do not continue, or if staff pay is not subsidized, there will be an impossible to solve crisis.”—Program Director/Administrator

Here's a brief summary of the survey data from Texas:

| | TEXAS | NATIONAL |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Sample Size | 321 | 12,897 |
| Child Care Center | 53.3% | 47.7% |
| Family Child Care | 10.9% | 18.6% |
| STABILIZATION GRANTS¹ | | |
| Child care directors/administrators who report receiving grants | 65.7% | 73.9% |
| Family child care owner/operators who report receiving grants | 80.0% | 85.7% |
| Total reporting that their program would have closed without grants | 36.6% | 34.0% |
| Total reporting that they believe their last payment will be in 2023 | 80.7% | 61.0% |
| When stabilization grants end: | | |
| Child care center directors saying their programs will have to raise tuition | 56.5% | 42.8% |
| Total reporting their programs will have to cut wages or be unable to sustain wage/salary increases | 41.0% | 23.0% |
| STAFFING AND SUPPLY | | |
| Current Challenges | | |
| Child care center directors reporting they are serving fewer children than they would like to serve | 27.1% | 46.4% |
| Most common reason they are under-enrolled? | Not enough staff | Not enough staff |
| Total reporting that their program is currently experiencing a staffing shortage | 51.4% | 67.0% |
| Among respondents in programs with a staffing shortage: | | |
| › Reporting they are serving fewer children | 43.0% | 45.4% |
| › Reporting a longer waitlist | 39.4% | 37.4% |
| Future Challenges | | |
| Total indicating “yes” or “maybe” to considering leaving their job or closing their family child care home | 23.1% | 29.2% |
| › In the field 5 years or less indicating “yes” or “maybe” to considering leaving their job or closing their family child care home | 21.1% | 45.0% |
| › Family child care providers considering leaving | 40.0% | 36.4% |
| › In minority-owned businesses considering leaving | 34.5% | 43.7% |
| › In non-minority-owned businesses considering leaving | 15.0% | 25.0% |
| Number one thing needed to stay | Competitive wages | Competitive wages |
| ECE WORKFORCE WELL-BEING | | |
| Total respondents experiencing financial insecurity in the last year | 26.8% | 29.5% |
| Total respondents who received more money from a wage increase or supplement in the last year | 47.7% | 49.4% |
| Total indicating that burnout/exhaustion are “greatly” or “to some extent” contributing to problems retaining teachers | 74.1% | 78.0% |

1. For more state-level information about the receipt of stability grants, please see ACF's state profiles. According to the profile for Texas, providers in 43% of Texas counties received funds as of 6/30/22. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/occ/Texas_ARP_Child_Care_Stabilization_FactSheet.pdf

Methodology This online survey, created and conducted by NAEYC using SurveyMonkey, represents the responses of a non-randomized sample of 13,037 individuals working in early childhood education settings who completed the survey in English or Spanish between October 5-23, 2022. 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 2021 Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (Codes: 11-9031, 25-2011, 25-2051, 39-9011). The final sample size for the national-level analysis is 12,897. In contrast, for the state-level analysis, the entire sample of responses from each state were used. We are unable to supply detailed analysis in states for which there are very small sample sizes across sub-groups. Respondents were asked to select any setting that applied to them. They could choose from the following list: child care center, family child care home, non-profit, for-profit, school-based, Head Start, faith-based, multi-site. For this brief, only the percentages for child care center and family child care are reported.

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 broad 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. Additional information available at www.naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys