FLORIDA'S COVID-19 CHILD CARE SURVEY REPORT

THE RESULTS OF OUR STATEWIDE SURVEY ON THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON CHILD CARE NEEDS AND ATTITUDES OF FLORIDA PARENTS.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Florida parents relied heavily on child care centers/preschool before the COVID-19 pandemic, and will rely on it to get back to work.

2. Florida parents are concerned for the health and safety of their children when considering a return to child care.

3. Florida parents were generally aware of CDC guidelines and requested that their center follow them.

4. Lower-income Florida families bear the brunt of COVID-19 financially and with an inability to find appropriate child care.

Our survey was conducted from Friday, May 1, through Monday, May 18, 2020. Results include perspectives from 1,514 Florida families across 35 counties.
For this report, respondents are defined as parents. Opposite are the responses by county.

45% of respondents were ESSENTIAL WORKERS as characterized by Governor DeSantis' Executive Order

WHAT KIND OF ESSENTIAL WORKER?

Of the respondents who stated they were essential workers:

- 37.99% are healthcare providers
- 9.46% work in childcare facilities
- 6.78% work in social services
- 4.94% work at restaurants
- 4.52% work at banks
- 4.38% work at grocery stores

AGE OF CHILDREN

Parents were asked the age of their children and allowed to check all that applied. We had a good balance of respondents with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

"I'M A SINGLE DAD OF FOUR KIDS AGES 12, 9, 6 AND 4. I'M DOING VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR ALL OF THEM WHILE TRYING TO GET ODD JOBS."
AGE OF PARENTS
Parents 31-40 years old were our most frequent survey respondents.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME
The largest group of respondents have an annual household income between $15,000 and $29,999.

SURVEY DISSEMINATION
Our survey was fielded among a convenience sample through The Movement’s website, newsletter, and social media. To invite participation from parents across geographic and demographic divisions, we asked local and statewide organizations working directly with parents of young children to also share through their networks. We also made the survey available in Spanish and Creole.

DATA ANALYSIS
The statistics shown throughout this report are drawn from our English-language survey, which received 1,514 responses from 35 Florida counties. Parent testimonials included here also include responses from our Spanish-language survey, which received 89 responses. We did not receive a significant response to our Creole survey.

34% of parents had a child who was a SCHOOL READINESS RECIPIENT

"I have been without work for two months. I’ve applied to various places but I have no idea how I might find a new job without child care."

Translated from Spanish
FINDINGS

Parents relied heavily on child care centers/preschool before the COVID-19 pandemic, and will rely on it to get back to work.

75% of parents rely on CHILD CARE CENTERS/PRESCHOOL

What type of child care arrangement does your family use?

59% of parents' child care PROGRAMS ARE CURRENTLY CLOSED

Is your child care program currently closed?

"Current daycare is closed. The few that are open are only offering care to medical workers, first responders, etc. The company I work for is open and considered 'essential' but not essential enough for the centers I've seen that are open."

"I am an essential worker, single mom, with no family around me. I basically relied on daycare to survive."

"My job needs me to return to work, however since I do not have child care, I am unable to at this time."

30% of parents expressed concern that their children are MISSING OUT ON LEARNING
Florida parents are concerned for the health and safety of their children when considering a return to child care.

31% of parents **WILL NOT IMMEDIATELY SEND THEIR CHILDREN BACK** to the same child care arrangement when reopening begins.

Parents aren’t just concerned for their children’s health, they are also concerned about the risk to vulnerable family members.

Of these parents **34%** cited the **HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THEIR CHILDREN** as the top reason for keeping their children out of child care.

"I WILL NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE UNTIL THERE IS A CURE FOR COVID-19."

"My child care center is taking the precautions. They have always maintained a clean center so I have no worries."

"Our family has high-risk individuals. I’m not sure when we will be ready to send her back to school, yet."

"I can’t think of a single way a center could make me feel more comfortable about the health & safety of my son." *Translated from Spanish*

"I don’t want to put my kids or my family members at risk by asking them for help with childcare. My husband and I both work from home and it’s been a challenge."

"Myself and my family have chronic diseases and it’s not safe yet."

Some parents are not worried about sending their children back to care.

"Will you send your child back to the same child care arrangement as soon as they reopen?"

The Children’s Movement of Florida Child Care Survey Report
Parents were generally aware of CDC guidelines and requested that their center follow them.

When asked what centers could do to make them more comfortable about sending their children back

43% of respondents referenced following

MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY THE CDC

"Exercise all CDC guidelines & take extra precautions."

"Follow the current safety measures recommended by the CDC and WHO or go above those measures."

WHAT KIND OF MEASURES?

Parents frequently asked that centers enact these recommendations:

- Disinfect toys and play areas
- Wear masks
- Wash hands
- Check temperatures
- Social distancing
- Reduced class sizes
- Prohibit visitors

"Wash children’s hands, all the surfaces they touch, and keep children spaced out. Don’t let anyone else in the classroom. Wear surgical masks."

Translated from Spanish

But parents are not willing/able to pay more for a center that enacts the CDC guidelines.

Are you willing/able to pay more for a center that has the ability to enact all of the CDC guidelines (social distancing, fewer children in class, etc.)?

Some parents stated there was nothing child care centers could do to make them feel comfortable sending their children back.

"Honestly, not much. The kids are 3 and 4 years old. No amount of hand washing and social distancing is going to keep them from sharing germs. I plan to send my child back to preschool when it is SAFE to do so, according to science-based agencies, like the CDC."
Lower-income families bear the brunt of COVID-19 financially and with an inability to find appropriate child care.

FAMILIES MAKING LESS THAN $50,000 A YEAR

- Are more likely to have issues finding appropriate care.
- Are less likely to send their children back to care because it costs too much
- Or because of job loss.

AFFORDABILITY IS A CONCERN

- "I was planning on enrolling my child in a summer camp, but they’re all closed for the summer. Affordable child care is either closed or to capacity."
- "I am currently a child care employee but my hours have been cut due to COVID-19. So I can’t afford to send my son to school."
- "I can’t afford child care."
- "There are no open schools or daycares near my work that are affordable. I am a health care worker and can’t afford $200 a week in daycare."
Our goal for this survey was to gather data on parent sentiments about child care during the COVID-19 pandemic. We wanted to learn what parents’ future intentions were when executive orders were lifted and to get some sense of how demand for care may shift upon re-opening. We also wanted to know whether or not parents were experiencing issues finding child care as they return to work, and what factors they consider when deciding how to navigate child care going forward.

We plan to bring these parent perspectives to our state leaders to inform evolving policies that support the child care industry and ensure continued, affordable access to high-quality care.

The Children’s Movement of Florida would like to thank Florida’s Department of Children and Families, The Children’s Trust of Miami-Dade County, the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, and several child care centers who provided feedback as we created the questions in this survey.

Respondents did not have to answer every question. The content of two open-ended questions was analyzed to identify overarching themes, and coded to derive descriptive statistics.

**LIMITATIONS**

This survey does not provide a random, representative sample of parents with young children in Florida. Individuals needed access to the internet and a computer or smartphone to complete the survey.

Our results offer timely parent perspectives on how the pandemic has impacted child care needs and attitudes, though we did not collect data on broader family impact. This may be an area to explore in future research.