

JULY 2020

# A FRAGILE ECOSYSTEM II

Kentucky Parents Respond to  
Child Care Crisis Following COVID-19



**The  
Prichard  
Committee**

Building a Groundswell  
for Excellent Education



**Community  
Coordinated  
Child Care**  
4-C



Child Care Council  
of Kentucky



learning grove



**APPALACHIAN**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD NETWORK



United Way of Kentucky



Metro United Way



United Way  
of Greater Cincinnati

# A CALL TO ACTION

The Kentucky Child Care Parent Survey was conducted in partnership with the following organizations: the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Kentucky Youth Advocates, Metro United Way, United Way of Kentucky, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Learning Grove, Child Care Advocates of Kentucky, Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C), Appalachian Early Childhood Network, and the Child Care Council of Kentucky.

From June 24th through July 14th we asked Kentucky parents and families to share their thoughts about child care and what's next as Kentucky reopens the economy. Over 1,500 responded. Their responses will hopefully help child care providers, community leaders, and policy makers better understand child care needs and plan for a future that ensures a high-quality, sustainable child care ecosystem.

The COVID-19 crisis is impacting our system of child care that was already fragile and suffered from inadequate public support. According to the Kentucky Division of Child Care, the number of regulated providers in Kentucky dropped from 4,400 in 2013 to 2,400 in 2019. Moreover, as noted in the 2017 Cost of Quality report, support for child care is insufficient to provide quality, full-day care to enough working families.

The results of our previous child care provider survey - and this just completed survey of parents and families - clearly show the need for greater financial support from Congress, and for a continued substantial, engaged planning with providers at the state level. Both are critical in ensuring that Kentucky's child care infrastructure is sustained immediately and in the long term.

A healthy child care business ecosystem is vitally important in creating a foundation for education in our youngest children. Quality child care programs also improve social and emotional growth, and enable their families to participate in the workforce. Moreover, child care providers are critical to the successful re-opening of our schools. Many families of school age children rely on child care for critical services outside of normal school hours. The needs of child care providers and parents and families must be given the attention and resources they deserve – at the state and federal levels – as we begin to re-open the Commonwealth.

**We are calling for Congress to provide \$50 billion in assistance to child care as part of the federal stimulus efforts.** The support must be robust and flexible, allowing states like Kentucky to support operating costs during mandated closures, co-pays and tuition based on enrollment, training and professional development, facility maintenance and cleaning. Additionally, support will be needed for costs related to re-opening and re-hiring as restrictions on operating are phased out.

**We are calling for the Governor to further elevate child care as part of the critical infrastructure necessary for Kentucky to be Healthy at Work by creating a COVID-19 Child Care Task Force.** This would ensure robust feedback from providers, families, businesses and communities on child care needs, and the allocation of any additional federal assistance for child care. Moreover, a concerted effort – including all stakeholders – is necessary to ensuring child care successfully reopens and is sustainable into the future, particularly over the next 12-18 months.

## CONGRESS MUST TAKE ACTION TO SAVE CHILD CARE SYSTEM

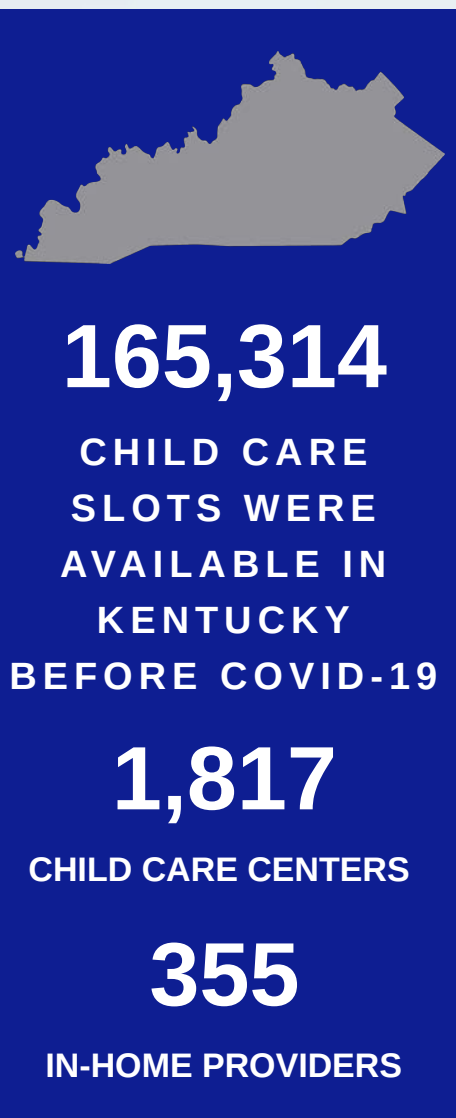
Analysis using state-by-state survey data from the National Association for the Education of Young People shows Kentucky could lose 42% of its child care supply and over 56,000 licensed child care slots without additional federal support. Estimates show that in order to sustain the child care system for both essential workers during the crisis and ensure that it can re-open in recovery, nearly \$9.6 billion per month of investment is necessary.

Along with other national and state partners, we have asked Congress for an additional \$50 billion for child care – enough to barely cover 6 months of costs.

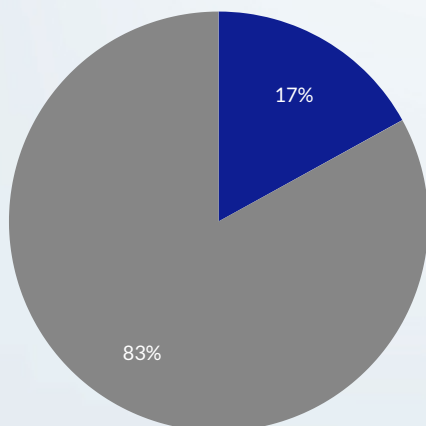
Preliminary estimates show Kentucky's share of \$50 billion could be approximately \$958 million. This would be used to care for the children of essential workers, support for providers and educators (open or closed), and investment in the system and its infrastructure to meet current needs quickly and future needs in rebuilding.

Congress must act to provide significant additional, direct investment to child care to support essential workers and first responders during the crisis, as well as protect the child care workforce and child care business by supporting them specifically during the crisis. This will help ensure that a robust child care system is sustainable coming out of our national emergency.

We are calling for Congress to provide \$50 billion in assistance to child care as part of the federal stimulus efforts. The support must be robust and flexible allowing states to support things such as: operating costs during mandated closures, support for copays and tuition based on enrollment, training and professional development, facility maintenance and cleaning, and what will be significant costs related to re-opening and re-hiring as restrictions on operating are phased out.



### PARENT PAID vs. CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCAP)

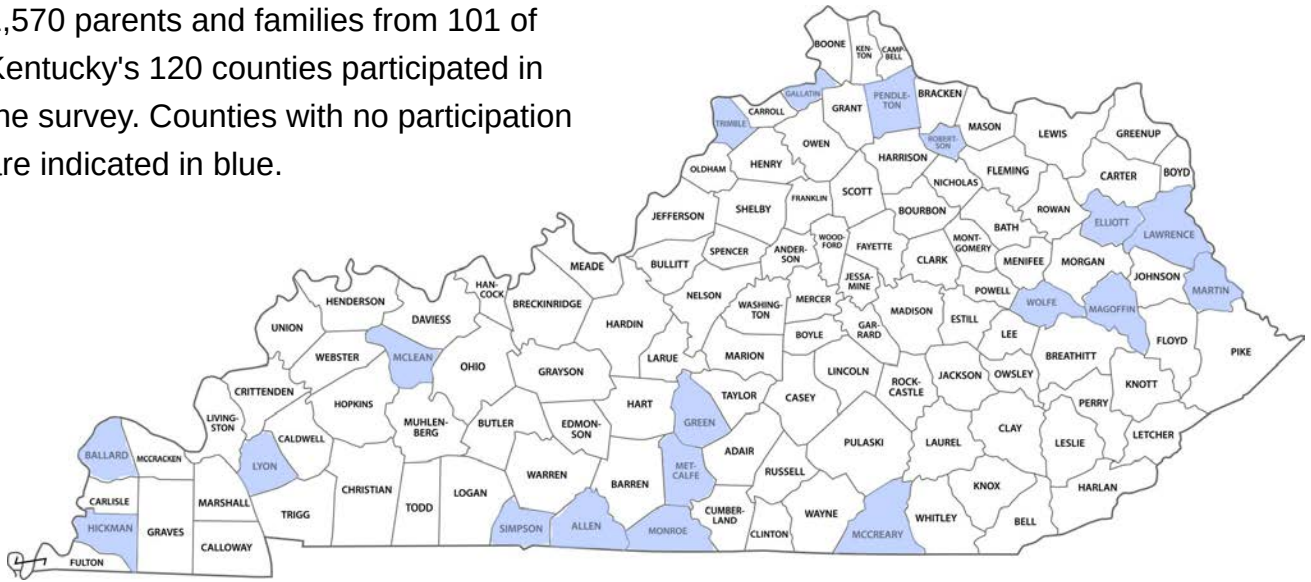


■ CCAP (17%) ■ Parent Paid (83%)

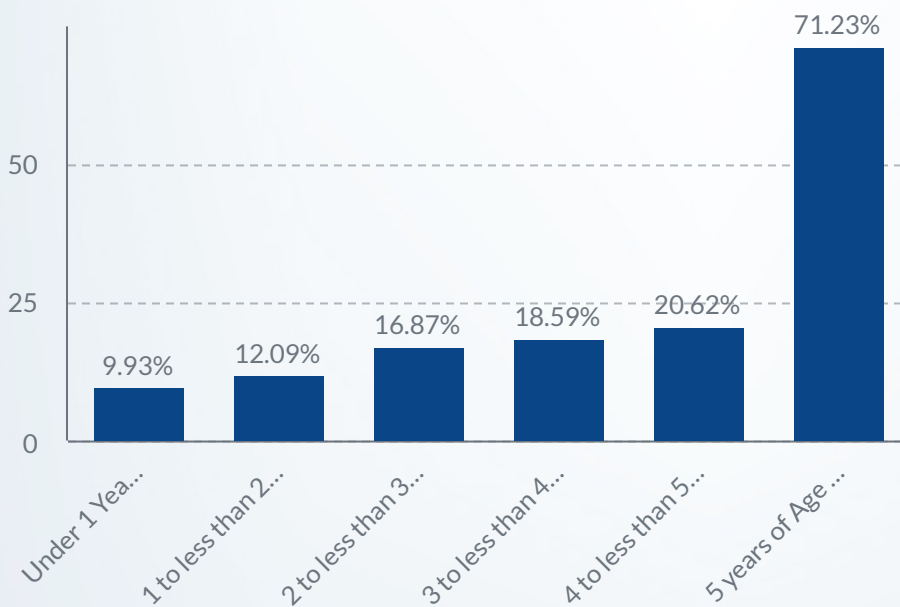
28,000 Kentucky children  
qualify for and attend child care  
using CCAP funds.

## SURVEY RESULTS

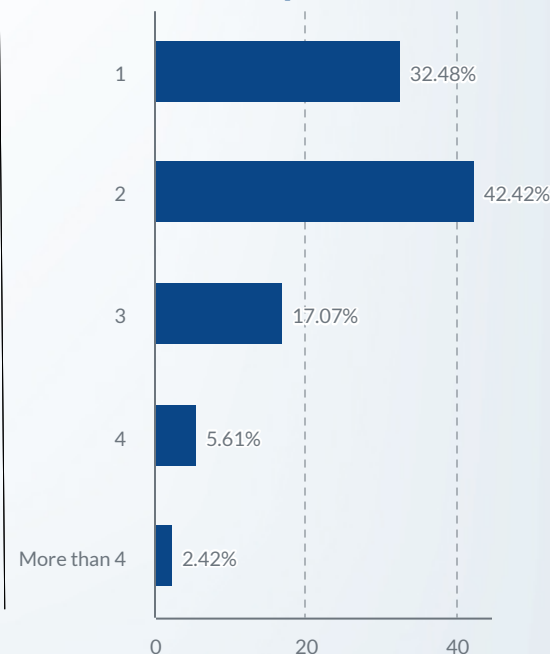
1,570 parents and families from 101 of Kentucky's 120 counties participated in the survey. Counties with no participation are indicated in blue.



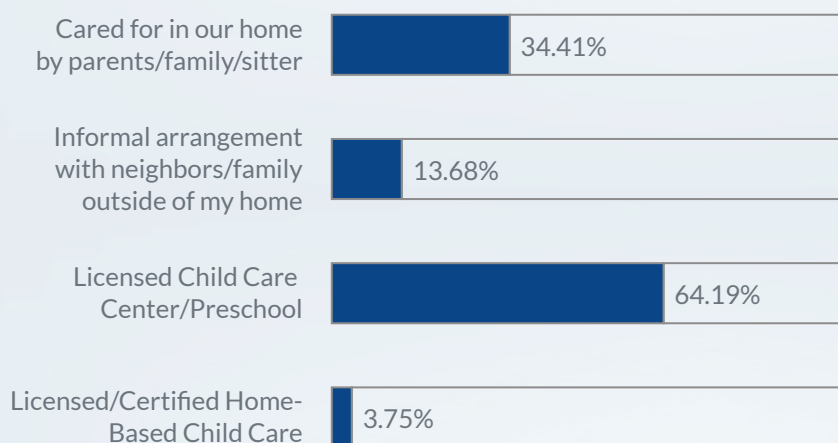
## Ages of children of respondents



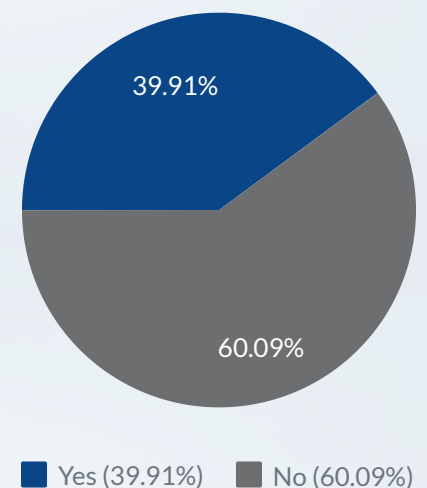
### Number of children per household



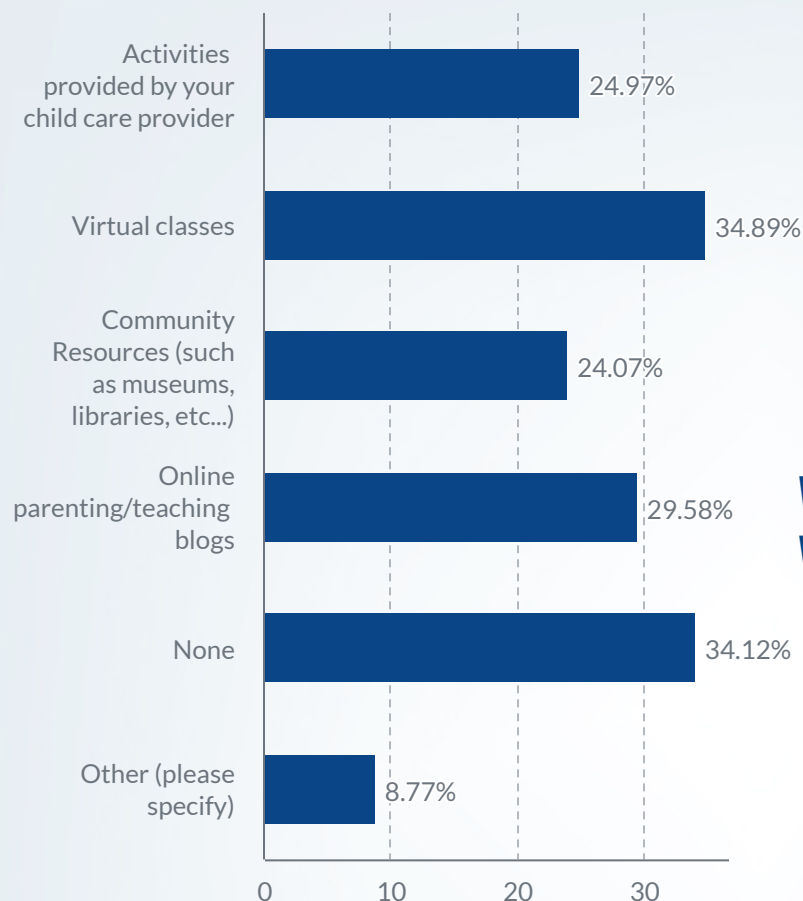
### Type of child care used before pandemic



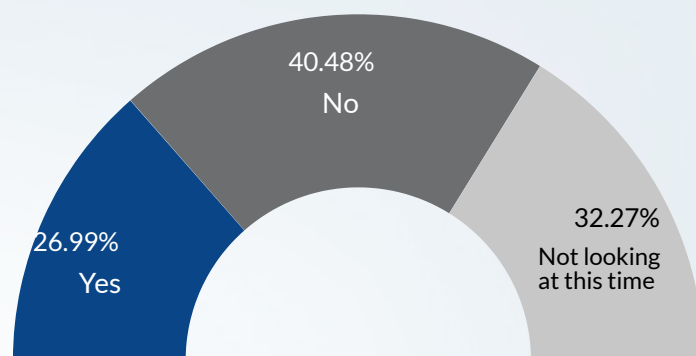
## Is your child care provider still closed?



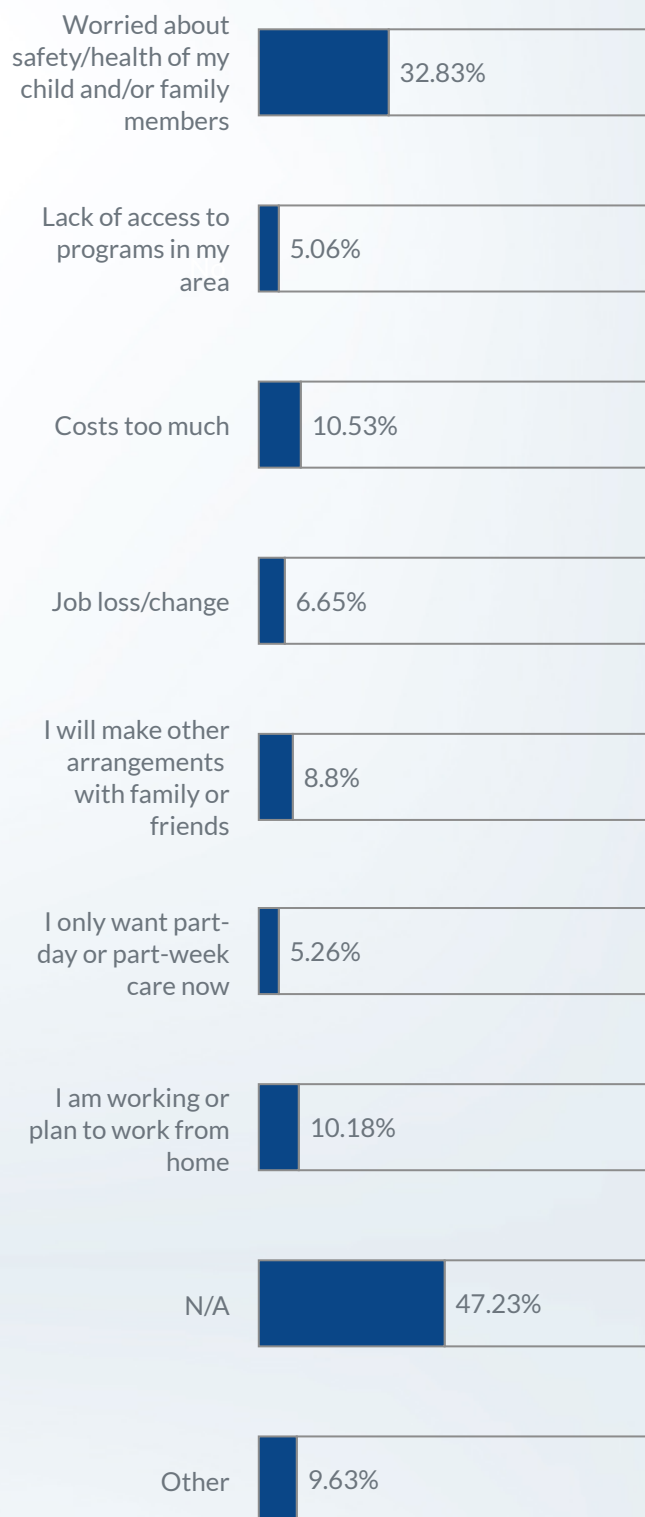
## What learning resources were/are used during closures?



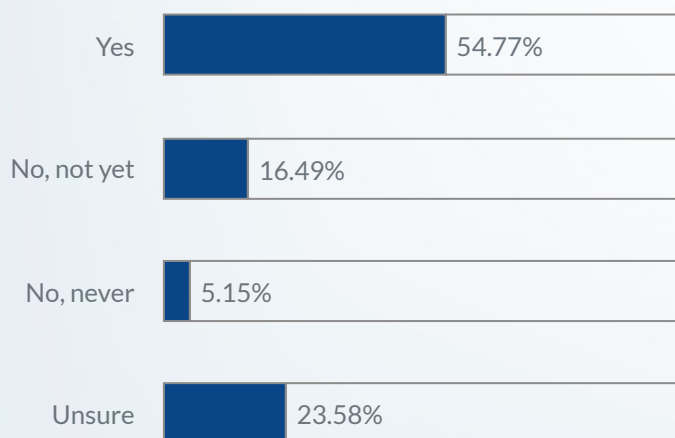
## Are you experiencing issues finding child care now?



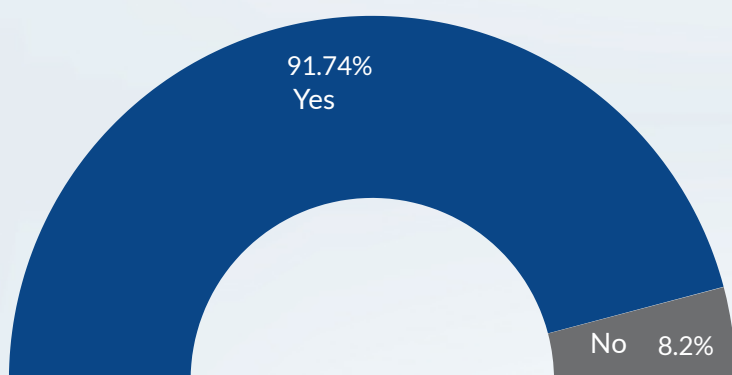
## Why wouldn't you send your child back to child care when centers reopen?



## Will you send your child back to child care?



## Should the state and federal government invest more money to support child care programs?





# PARENT COMMENTS

*I think our current child care facility is probably doing a good job of following CDC guidance, however, I'm still scared to send her there.*

*I'm not sure there is anything they can do. Health and safety is our primary concern. Cases continue to spike across the country. Child care providers are doing what they can, but social distancing is the only way I can control their exposure and therefore our exposure.*

*All staff should wear masks, practice social distancing in school, and place children in small groups. Emphasis needed on hand washing and individual art supplies, significant outdoor activities.*

## SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

- Almost 30% of parents report struggling to find child care.
- Half of parents report being moderately to extremely stressed about access to care.
- 45% of parent are either unsure, will not or are delaying sending children back to same child care setting.
- Of those not sending children back, 15% will be more comfortable between 3-12 months from now, while over 50% are unsure.
- The largest concern for parents in sending kids back is health and safety of children and family members.
- Over 70% of respondents reported having school-age children as well – underscoring the critical role child care plays in out-of-school care and education, and will be necessary as school districts choose between alternatives for restarting school.
- When asked what providers can do to make them feel more safe, majority of comments related to following proper health/safety guidelines, providing alternative schedules, and reduced class sizes.
- 92% of respondents said they support more government support to help providers meet new requirements/guidelines related to pandemic.



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