



A FRAGILE ECOSYSTEM III

COVID-19'S CONTINUED IMPACT ON CHILD CARE FOR KENTUCKY PARENTS AND FAMILIES



The Prichard Committee

Building a Groundswell
for Excellent Education



United Way

Metro United Way



United Way

of Greater Cincinnati



United Way

United Way of Kentucky



learning grove



Child Care Advocates
of Kentucky



**Community Coordinated
Child Care**
4-C



APPALACHIAN
Early Childhood Network



EC LEARN



Who We Are

This survey is a partnership of 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 EC Learn – all of whom are committed to the success of Kentucky’s children, families, and child care providers.

What We Did

The Kentucky Child Care Survey – Continuing Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Parents and Families is the third in a series begun in May of 2020 to gather information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child care providers, parents and families. Reports of the previous two are available at prichardcommittee.org/FragileEcosystem3.

From November 16th through December 18th, 2020, we asked Kentucky parents and families to share their thoughts and concerns about the continuing impact on child care of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 1,400 responded. The survey was also provided in a Spanish translation.

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. Parents and families are facing many challenges coping with the impact of COVID-19. School is open, but may be virtual. Child care may be difficult to find. Work situations have changed. Juggling work, learning at home, and child care is not easy.

Why We Did It

Parents and families are facing many challenges coping with the impact of COVID-19. School is open, but may be virtual. Child care may be difficult to find. Work situations have changed. Juggling work, learning at home, and child care is not easy.

The COVID-19 crisis continues to impact our system of child care that was already fragile and suffered from inadequate public support. Kentucky has lost close to an additional 10% of child care providers during the pandemic – but this is on top of losing nearly 50% in the previous six years with the number of regulated providers dropping from 4,400 in 2013 to 2,400 in 2019. Moreover, as noted in the [2017 Cost of Quality report](#), support for child care remains insufficient to provide quality, full-day care to enough working families.

That Kentucky has not seen more impact during the pandemic is largely due to the efforts of federal stimulus dollars and the state’s effort to use those funds to preserve our child care capacity. Kentucky [received \\$67.7 million](#) from the \$3.5 billion allocated for child care in the CARES Act in March 2020, and is estimated to [receive an additional \\$192 million](#) from the \$10 billion allocated for child care in the December 2020 federal stimulus package.

Our Call to Action

We are thankful for the efforts of Kentucky’s federal delegation to secure these funds, and our state leaders for getting them distributed to keep providers open. But these are inevitable one-time funds, and it is likely that additional support may be necessary. In any case, state leaders must continue to focus on Kentucky’s own investments to sustain child care and support more families with access to high-quality, full-day care.

The results of our previous child care surveys - and this most recent survey of parents and families - clearly demonstrate the struggles Kentucky communities face with child care, and both the need and demand for greater public investment at the state and federal level.

A healthy early childhood 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 reopening 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.

Child care is too important to the education of our young children, their health and well-being, and families’ ability to work. As state policy leaders continue through the 2021 legislative session, we call on General Assembly and Governor to **immediately invest in increased child care assistance reimbursement rates and incentives for serving infants, toddlers & young children in high-quality center and home-based childcare that begins to chart a sustainable path toward increasing eligibility for assistance to 200% of the federal poverty level.** The success of Kentucky’s children, families, and economy deserve nothing less.

And while we remain grateful for the federal stimulus support for child care so far, **we continue our call for Congress to provide additional assistance to child care as part of future federal stimulus efforts – up to [the estimated \\$50 billion necessary](#) to ensure the sustainability of the child care system.** The support must be robust and flexible, allowing states like Kentucky to support operating costs, co-pays and tuition based on enrollment, training and professional development, facility maintenance and cleaning.

Survey Demographics

85 OUT OF 120 KENTUCKY COUNTIES REPRESENTED

Respondents

1,412

Multi-Child Households

70%

Receive CCAP

6.5%

Parents working less than full time or unemployed

40%

Households with school-age

67%

Households with pre-school-age children

47%

Households with infants & toddlers

44%

Respondents of Hispanic/Latinx origin

3.20%

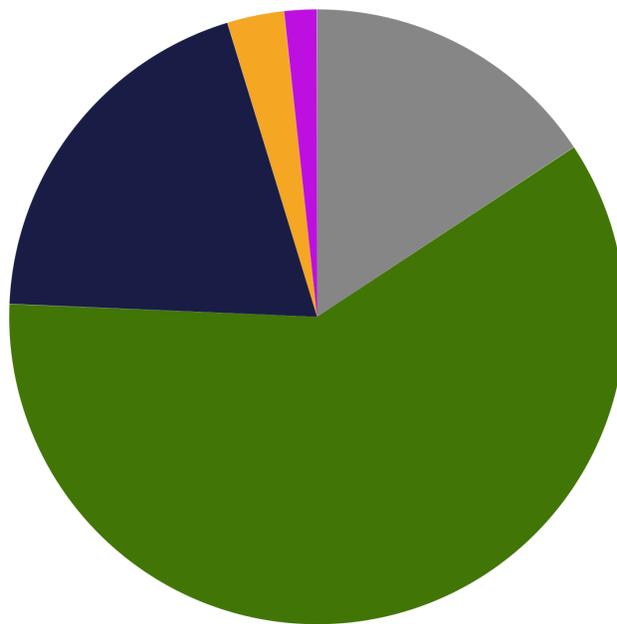


165,314
CHILD CARE SLOTS WERE AVAILABLE IN KENTUCKY BEFORE COVID-19

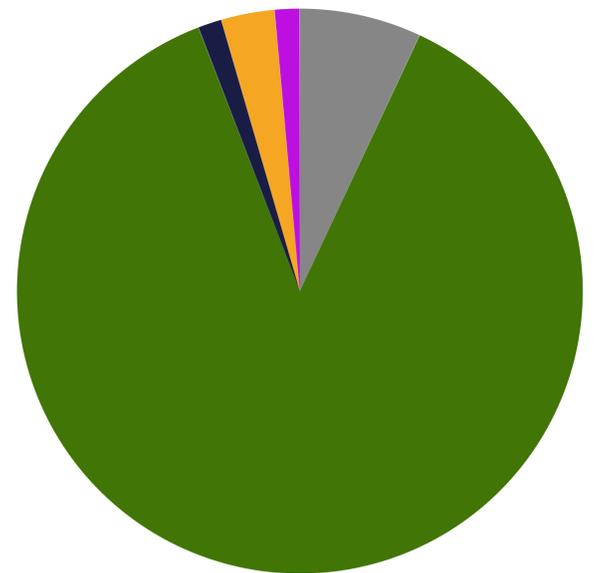
1,817
CHILD CARE CENTERS

355
IN-HOME PROVIDERS

Age Demographics of Survey Respondents



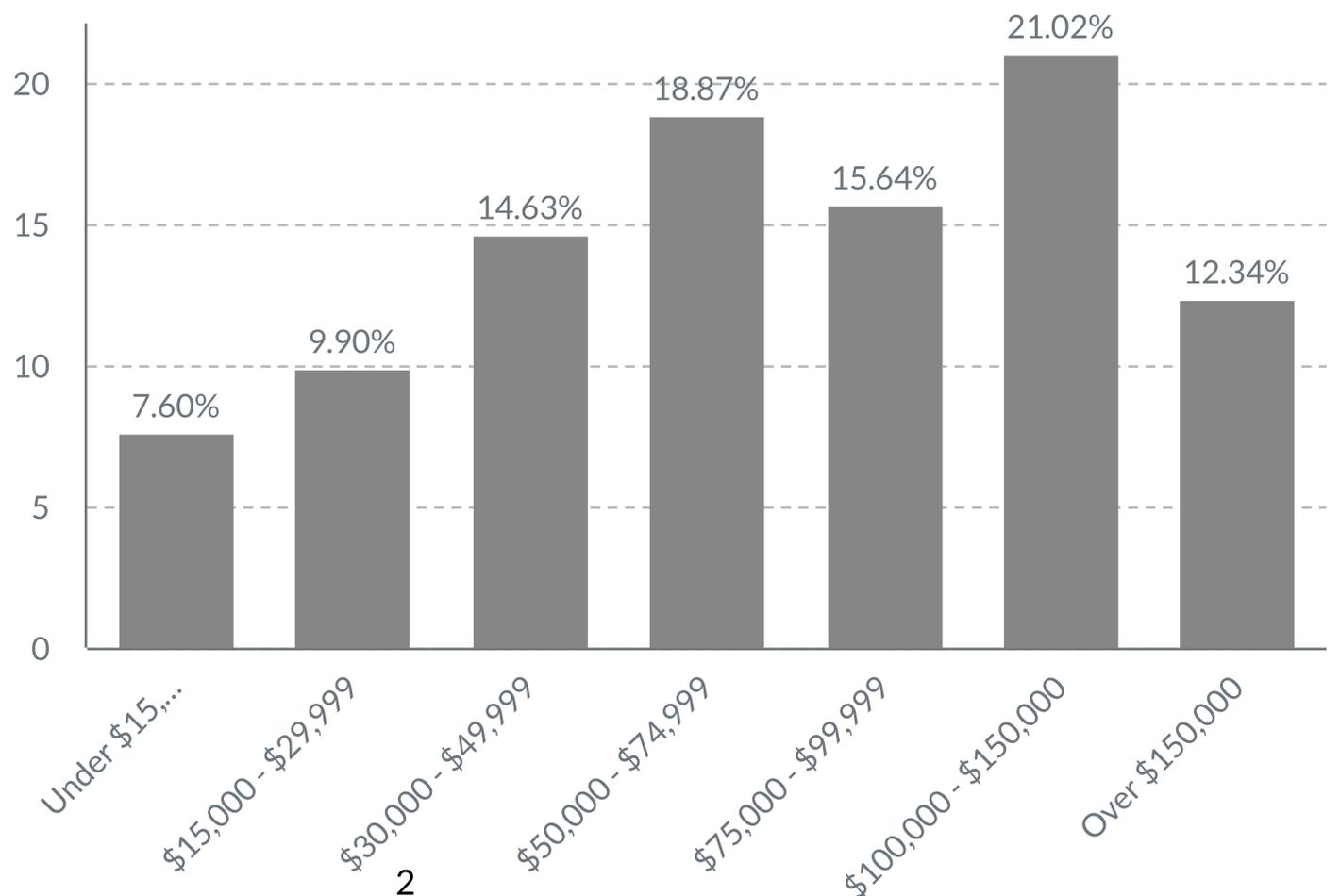
Race of Survey Respondents



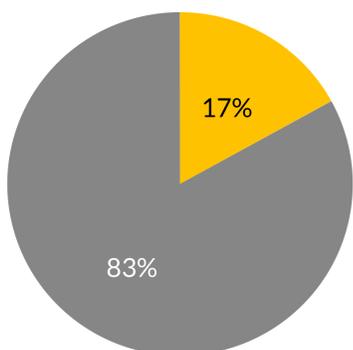
20-29 (15.7%) 30-39 (59.97%)
40-49 (19.63%) 50-59 (2.99%)
60+ (1.71%)

Black or African American (6.97%)
White (87.2%) Asian (1.35%)
From Multiple Races (3.06%)
Other (1.42%)

Income Levels of Survey Respondents



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.

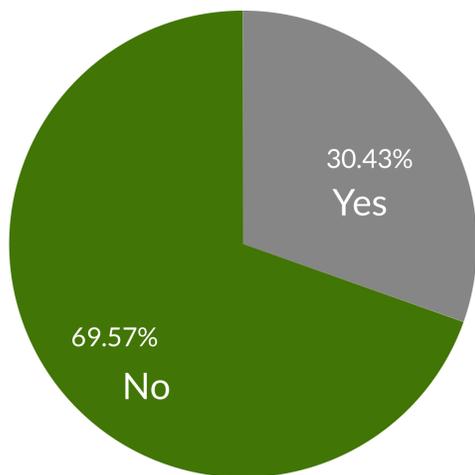
Access to Child Care



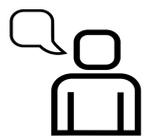
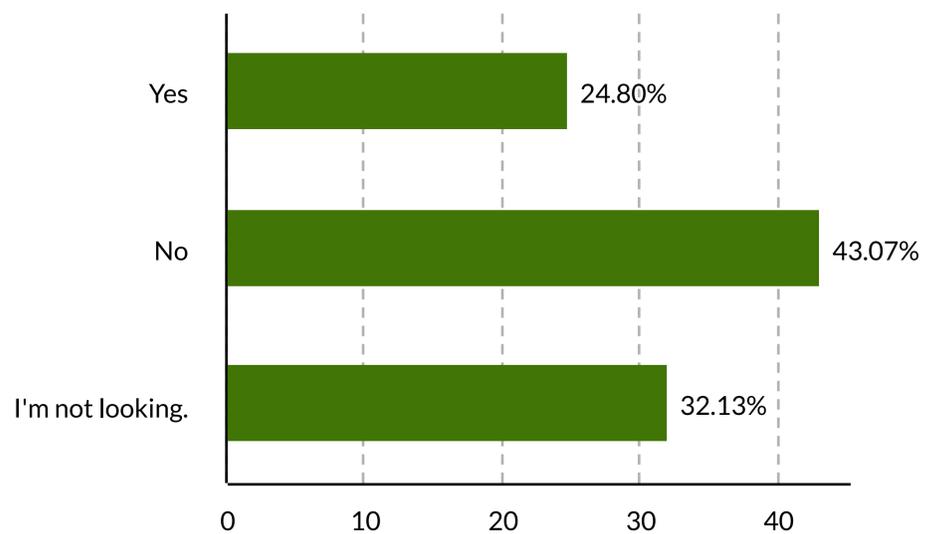
Key Finding

30% responded that their child care provider used prior to the pandemic is currently closed. While this is higher than the actual percentage of providers that have permanently or temporarily closed, it indicates that even if a provider is open, their capacity to serve families may still be dramatically less than prior to COVID-19.

Is your child care facility closed?



Are you struggling to find child care?



Respondent Voices

“ We just barely made it onto a waiting list at one of the 4 centers to which we applied. We only just started two days ago, we had been looking for weeks for a place for our son.

“ Child care is closed for a week with a teacher shortage and school for my first grader is home-based NTI. My husband and I both work full time and don't have anyone to watch the kids.

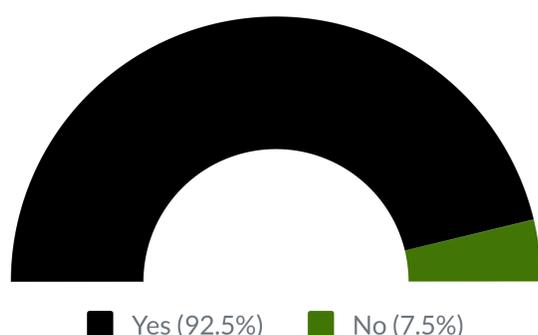
Child Care Funding



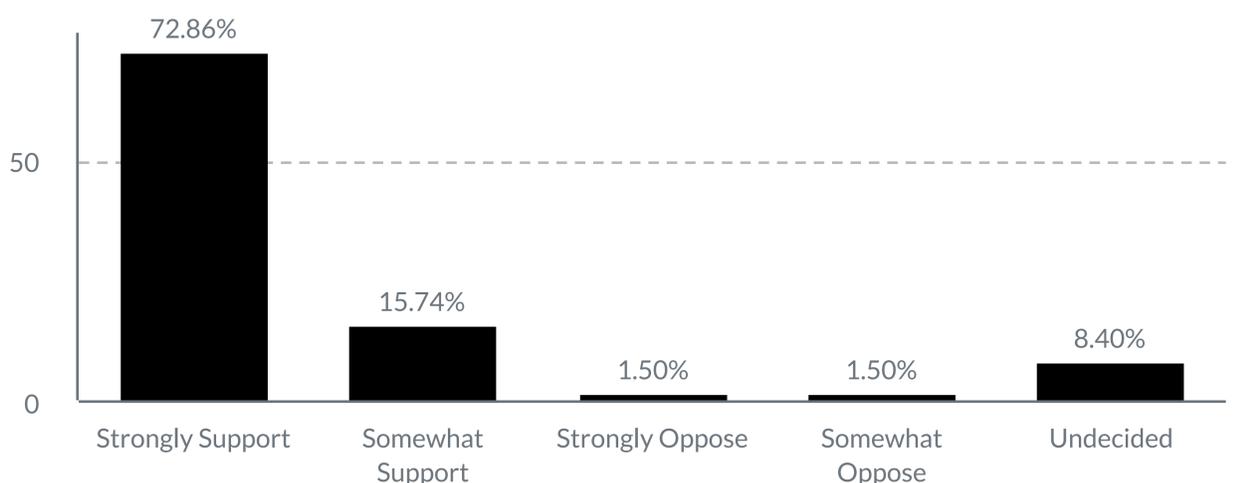
Key Finding

Nearly all respondents support additional public investment at the state and federal level to support not only child care during the pandemic, but to help working families afford access to high-quality care.

Should government invest more in child care through the pandemic?



Do you support or oppose increased state funding to support working parents' child care costs?



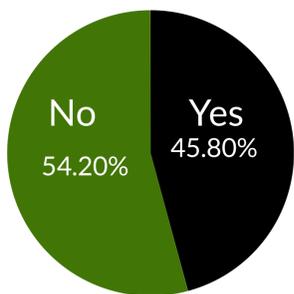
Impact on Family Income & Lifestyle



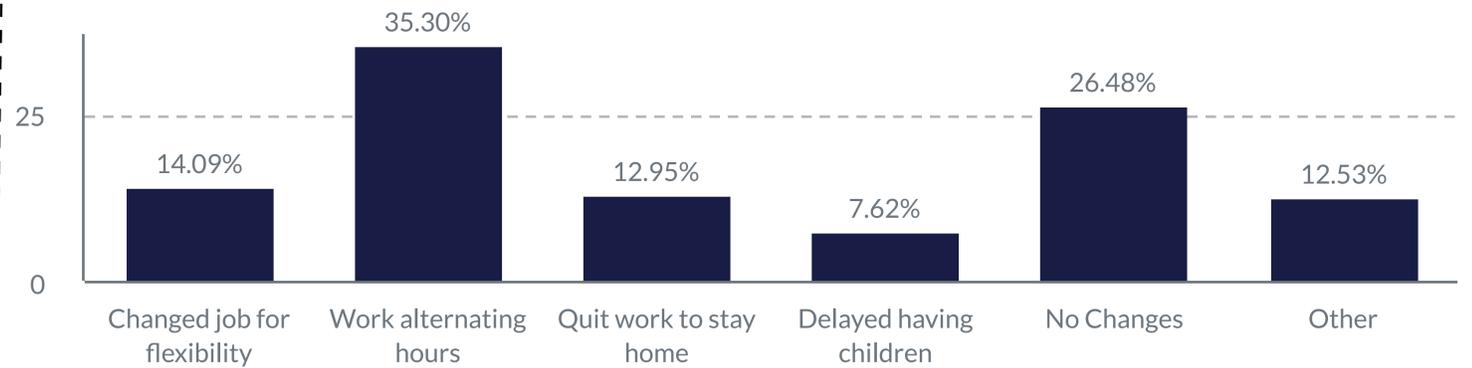
Key Finding

46% have quit jobs, declined jobs, or greatly changed their jobs due to issues with child care since March 2020.

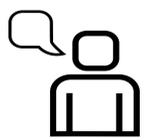
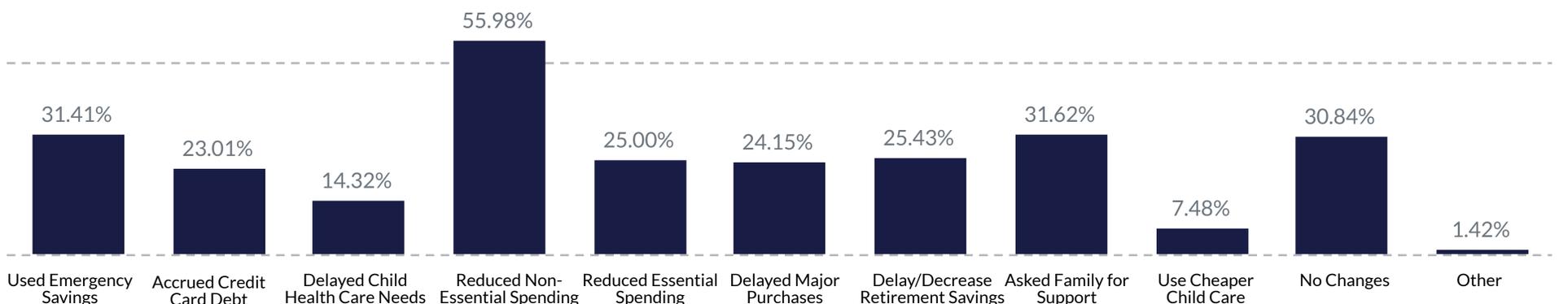
Has your job status changed due to child care issues?



Have you made any lifestyle changes in order to provide child care?



Have you made financial changes in order to afford child care expenses?



Respondent Voices

“ Trouble finding childcare made it impossible for me to work. It made no sense to sacrifice half my income for in-home childcare. We made the decision to become a single income family and that has been tough.

“ My husband and I are working 50% in the office to be home to care for my son during the time his school is closed. If things don't improve, I may have to take a pay cut in order to provide care for my son when my husband is required to return to full time.

“ I am a teacher and it was extremely difficult to give 110% virtually when I had all 3 kids at home due to child care and schools closed.

“ Both, my husband and myself lost our jobs. I was lucky enough to go back in September, but his job closed his department permanently. While he is working towards bringing a second income, it is difficult with lack of childcare or income for childcare.

Stress Levels



Key Finding

Families have varying levels of concern and stress about child care access and sending children back into care during the pandemic. State and community leaders should consider what types of communication about the level of support for child care and its place in the public health plan could help alleviate some of these concerns.

What are your primary concerns with having your children out of care?

37%

Missing out on learning and/or forgetting what they already learned.

30%

Missing out on social interactions with friends.

17%

Not being able to give them enough attention during the day.

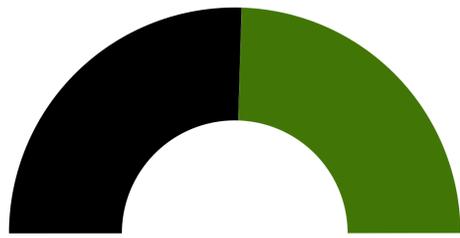
2.5%

Not being able to feed them regularly.

5.5%

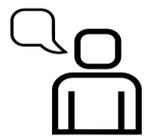
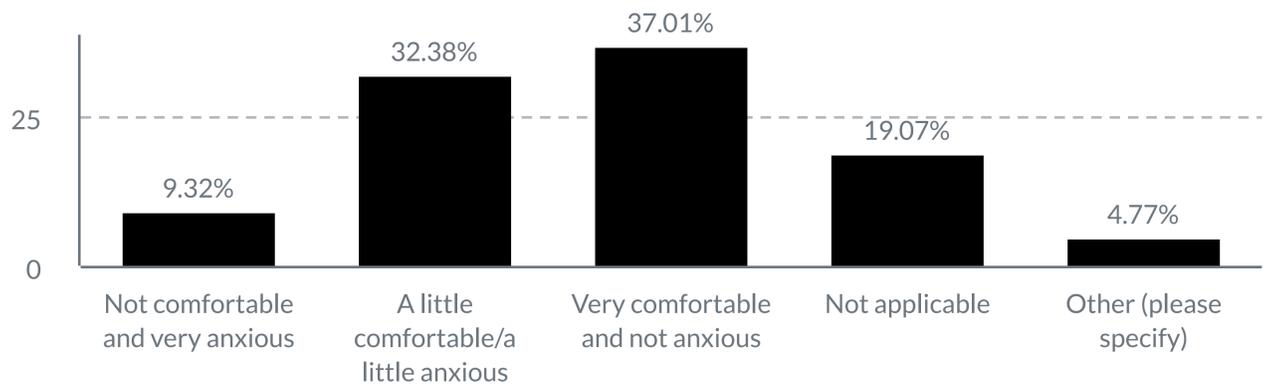
Not having a safe place for them.

What is your stress level about access to child care?



■ Moderately/Extremely Stressed (51%)
■ Not Stressed/Slightly Stressed (49%)

How comfortably do you feel about returning to the same child care you had before the pandemic?



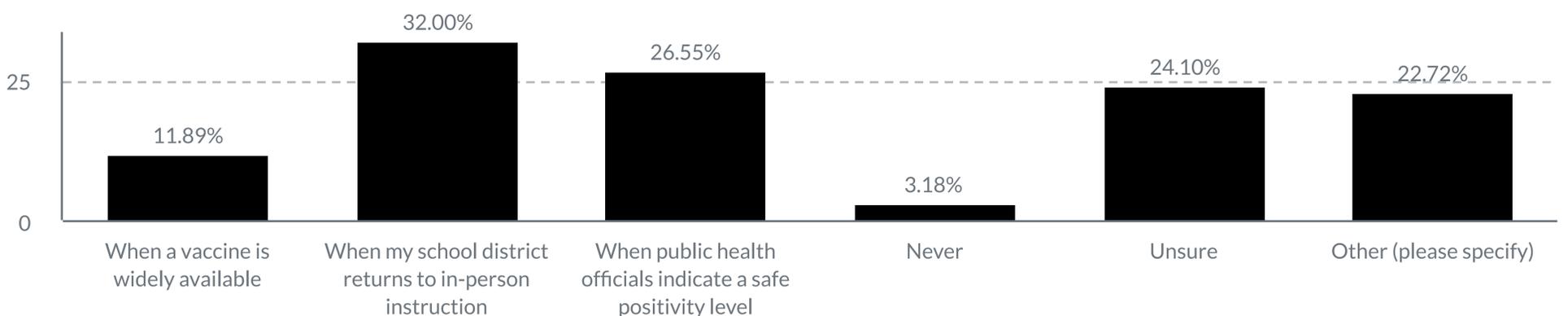
Respondent Voices

“ I would feel relieved to have them return to child care. I am able to work full-time without changing hours and losing money. Being in child care is a relief and less stress because I can continue to work and have no worries because my children are cared for. Yes, I am concerned about COVID but I need a daycare to continue working.

“ I am not comfortable sending my children to any child care out of our family and neighbor quarantine bubble. My child will continue to finish out the school year virtually.

“ I feel very good about how our child care center has handled the pandemic and the protocols they have in place!

When will you feel comfortable returning to child care?





prichardcommittee.org

Since 1983, the Prichard Committee has worked to study priority issues, inform the public and policy makers about best practices, and engage citizens, business leaders, families, students, and other stakeholders in a shared mission to move Kentucky to the top tier of states for education excellence and equity for all children, from their earliest years through postsecondary education.

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