THE SECOND YEAR IN A PANDEMIC

2022

CHILD CARE IN MAINE

Right FROM THE Start
Working to ensure all Maine children thrive.

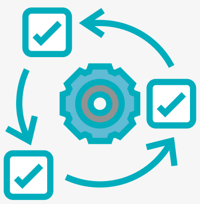
THIS SURVEY REPORT WAS PREPARED BY MEMBERS OF THE RIGHT FROM THE START COALITION

MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
FAMILY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF MAINE
YMCA ALLIANCE OF NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
MAINE HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

TIMELINE

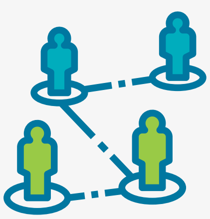
A survey was sent by email to all licensed child care programs in Maine and followed up by additional outreach from MaineAEYC, FCCAM, Head Starts, and YMCA leadership, and was completed between March 16th and April 1st, 2022.

METHODOLOGY



The survey represents the responses of a non-randomized sample of 610 individuals who own or lead one licensed child care program or several programs. In total the data represents 765 licensed child care programs, or 48% of licensed programs in Maine. 54% of respondents were from family child care homes, 43% from licensed child care centers including nursery schools, small facilities, Head Starts, and YMCAs. 3% of respondents were from out of school time programs.

DEMOGRAPHICS



The respondents represent providers in all 16 counties in Maine, with percent of respondents from each county falling within 1% of the percent of licensed programs in that county compared to all licensed programs in Maine. Cumberland County was overrepresented by 2.59%.

Given the constantly changing and widely varying nature of the COVID-19 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, which may show trends in the experiences of the field and industry at large.

RESULTS OVERVIEW

The results of this survey highlight the continued challenges this past year for Maine child care programs. The administrators, owners, teachers, and staff have met the uncertainty and stress of COVID-19 with resilience and strength. Programs shared about the significant positive impacts of the federal Child Care Stabilization Grants. They expressed deep concern over their growing waitlists, knowing that families are struggling to find the care they need for their children. Many programs face severe staff shortages and continued financial struggle.

Top challenges for child care programs this year

2022 ANSWERS FROM FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

- 58% IMPLEMENTING/ENFORCING COVID-19 PROTOCOLS
- 53% GROWING WAITLIST
- 21% UNDERENROLLED
- 19% OPERATING AT A DEFICIT

2022 ANSWERS FROM CHILD CARE CENTERS

- 64% GROWING WAITLIST
- 57% STAFF SHORTAGES
- 49% IMPLEMENTING/ENFORCING COVID-19 PROTOCOLS
- 26% OPERATING AT A DEFICIT

Top challenges for child care programs last year

2021 ANSWERS FROM FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

- 43% GROWING WAITLIST
- 34% UNDER-ENROLLED
- 29% OPERATING AT A DEFICIT

2021 ANSWERS FROM CHILD CARE CENTERS

- 58% STAFF SHORTAGES
- 44% OPERATING AT A DEFICIT
- 43% GROWING WAITLIST

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ENROLLMENT?

It is important to understand the difference between licensed capacity and enrollment. Licensed capacity tells a program the maximum number of children they can enroll based on their space and square footage. Enrollment is how many children are currently attending.

43% of programs have been enrolled at 90-100% of their licensed capacity this year, compared with 35% last year.

This year we also asked programs about their preferred capacity, since some never plan to enroll at their full licensed capacity, and choose to keep their total enrollment below the maximum number permitted. 56% of programs responding indicated they are enrolled at 90-100% of their preferred capacity.

Family Child Care

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 (permanently closed)	1.81%	6
enrolled between 1%-25% capacity	4.53%	15
enrolled between 26%-50% capacity	10.27%	34
enrolled between 51%-75% capacity	16.31%	54
enrolled between 76%-90% capacity	15.71%	52
enrolled between 91%-100% capacity	51.36%	170
Total		**331**

For family child care respondents, who are experiencing lower enrollment, 32% have done so as part of following health and safety guidelines, 27% have had to stay below due to staff shortages, and 25% have seen less interest in group care from parents this year.

Center Based Child Care

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 (permanently closed)	0.74%	2
enrolled between 1%-25% capacity	1.47%	4
enrolled between 26%-50% capacity	13.97%	38
enrolled between 51%-75% capacity	25.37%	69
enrolled between 76%-90% capacity	25.37%	69
enrolled between 91%-100% capacity	33.09%	90
Total		**272**

For child care center respondents, who are experiencing lower enrollment, 60% have done so to mitigate COVID-19 risks, 32% have seen less interest in group care from parents this year, and 30% have had to stay below capacity due to staffing shortages.