Family Perspective COVID-19 Survey
April 20 - May 15, 2020

Family Perspective: Child Care in Massachusetts

This survey was designed for the parents of young children (age birth through five) in Massachusetts. The survey has 2,295 total responses to date and the participants are from various regions across the Commonwealth (see below). Their experiences during the Coronavirus pandemic and perspectives on reopening will help advocates and government officials plan for the future.

Region: (2,295 responses)

- Western MA: 22%
- Central MA: 13%
- Greater Boston Area: 11%
- South East: 11%
- North East: 11%
- Unknown: 32%

Employment Status

What was the employment status of the adult member(s) in your household prior to the Coronavirus pandemic? (2,291 responses)

- One full-time worker: 71%
- Two full-time workers: 14%
- One part-time worker: 12%
- Two part-time workers: 2%
- One part-time worker and one full-time worker: 1%
- Other: 8%

What is the current work status of the adult member(s) in your household? (check any that apply) (2,291 responses)

- Working Remotely: 72%
- No Change: 18%
- Furloughed or Laid Off: 18%
- Working Reduced Hours: 8%
- Working Overtime: 22%

"It is proving difficult, draining, and detrimental to the mental well-being for working parents to juggle full time workloads and round-the-clock childcare. While many parents are non-essential, they are still working remotely but without the option of childcare. Needless to say, one person cannot perform two full-time jobs simultaneously. Parents need support in the form of teaching resources but also mental health and emotional support." Natick, MA

"I am also worried about my own personal burnout during this crisis. I have been focusing less and less on my job as the weeks go on, and I feel that by the time daycare opens I will be so exhausted and burnt out that I won't be able to focus on my career and that my career will suffer. I am worried about the lasting impacts this will have my child, our family, my marriage and my career." Hudson, MA

"At this point in time, I simply don't have the confidence that my spouse and I will remain employed throughout the summer." Western MA

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Essential Workers

Are you or is a member of your household an essential employee as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts? (2,295 responses)

What type of essential worker are you (member of household)? (934 responses, this chart depicts the top ten results)

- Health Care/Public Health/Human Services: 37%
- Community, Education, Government-Based Operations and Essential Functions: 8%
- Food and Agriculture: 6%
- Transportation and Logistics: 5%
- Financial Services: 5%
- Critical Manufacturing: 4%
- Law Enforcement/Public Safety/First Responder: 5%
- Construction-Related Activities: 4%
- Communications and Information Technology: 3%
- Defense Industrial Base: 3%
- Public Works & Infrastructure Support Services: 2%

“Our Emergency Child Care Program is amazing! The staff are so awesome with my children. They are excited to see my kids each morning and vice versa. They have taken extra measures to ensure everyone remains safe. The teachers are devastated the center is closed until the end of June. That is how much they love our children. But they understand and they want everyone to stay healthy! We love every teacher! We don't know what we would do without these essential childcare providers!!”
Franklin, MA

“It's important to us that our kids are safe and happy and have relatively predictable childcare environments with which we're very familiar.”
Florence, MA

“I don’t feel comfortable bringing my child to an emergency center based on health and safety concerns, and due to the lack of relationship with teachers.”
South East MA

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Emergency Child Care Programs

Are you using an Emergency Child Care Program (ECCP) established by the Department of Early Education and Care? (934 responses)

- Yes: 96%
- No: 4%

We then asked parents who are using the Emergency Child Care Program if it was meeting their needs. Due to the small sample size (42 responses) we elected to omit the results from our initial summary. We will update this section after we poll more ECCP parents.

Why aren’t you using an Emergency Child Care Program established by MA (choose all that apply)? (892 responses)

- Someone in my household is providing child care support: 60%
- I have health concerns with group child care (Coronavirus): 33%
- They don't meet the needs of my family: 10%
- I didn't know about these programs: 10%
- I know about them, but there are none in my area: 6%
- I have made other child care arrangements: 13%
- Other: 10%

“If this continues long term, we may not be able to sustain childcare on a daily basis the way we are.” Western MA

“Because I have the ability to work remotely, I feel like I should do my part to avoid using up a space in these programs that could be used by someone who needs it more urgently.” Medford, MA

“My workplace is currently a “hot spot” for COVID19. I am a single parent and have no other options for my children to go other than childcare. If I bring home the virus, I would risk exposing not only my own children but the other children in the childcare facility.” Ayer, MA

“I would be hesitant to return to childcare if the virus is still widespread, because I don’t want to risk my child becoming infected through school and then possibly transmitting that infection. If the virus is resolved (or if there is widespread testing), I would feel more comfortable returning to childcare.” Western MA

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How likely is it that you will use the Emergency Child Care Programs in the future? (892 responses)

- Not likely: 4%
- Somewhat likely: 20%
- Very likely: 76%

What’s happening during the childcare closure?

Please select all the statements you have been considering while childcare is closed in MA? (2,295 responses)

- I am worried that my child is missing out on important developmental opportunities (socialization and learning). 82%
- I am concerned about the spread of Coronavirus through child care. 70%
- I am struggling to work from home without child care. 59%
- I will not be able to return to work without a consistent child care solution for my child. 48%
- I am focused on our family’s basic financial needs - food, paying bills, essential supplies, the mortgage, etc. 47%
- I am uncertain of my own employment. 24%
- I am worried I will no longer be able to afford to put my child in a child care program at the conclusion of this crisis. 14%
- Other 11%

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Tuition Payment:
Were you paying tuition to attend your early childhood program, center or family childcare home? (2,293 responses)

- 91% Yes
- 8% No
- 1% Not Sure

How willing are you to continue to pay for that tuition during this closure? (2,090 responses)

- 31% Very Unwilling
- 24% Somewhat Unwilling
- 16% Not Sure
- 22% Somewhat Willing
- 7% Very Willing

Parent Supports:
Would you be interested in virtual parent coaching while your child is not attending childcare? (2,236 responses)

- 52% Yes
- 13% No
- 35% Maybe

Please select the topics you would be most interested in hearing about during a virtual coaching session (select all that apply): (2,236 responses)

- At-Home Learning Activities
- Socialization during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Child Development (milestones)
- Physical Activities for Young Children
- Behavior Management Resources
- Teaching Instruction
- Nutrition and Health Resources
- Other

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What are your plans when childcare reopens?

When the Governor reopening childcare, are you planning to return to your childcare provider? (2,295 responses)

- Yes: 66%
- No: 29%
- Not Sure: 5%

Are you hesitant to return to childcare due to (choose all that apply): (779 responses)

- Health Concerns: 88%
- Employment/Financial Concerns: 28%
- Transportation Concerns: 3%
- Other: 5%

Would you feel more comfortable using an alternative form of childcare for the duration of the Coronavirus pandemic (choose all that apply)? (779 responses)

- I won't feel comfortable leaving my children with anyone else for the foreseeable future: 49%
- I plan to eventually return to my previous child care: 46%
- I won't feel comfortable leaving my children with anyone else for the foreseeable future: 34%
- In-Home Child Care (Nanny): 28%
- Family Child Care: 10%
- Center-Based Programs: 6%
- Public School Preschool Programs: 4%
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Please indicate what sources you rely on to help make decisions about childcare during this current crisis period: (2,295 responses)

- My Child Care Provider: 68%
- Family and Friends: 49%
- Department of Early Education and Care: 39%
- My Employer: 38%
- Local Media - Newspaper, TV: 33%
- Other: 13%
- Social Media: 10%

Please select where your child was receiving care prior to Coronavirus? (2,295 responses)

- Center-Based Programs: 80%
- Family Child Care: 12%
- Public School Preschool Programs: 5%
- In-Home Child Care (Nanny): 1%
- Loved Ones (Family/Friends): 2%

Are you still in contact with your childcare provider? (2,295 responses)

- Yes: 94%
- No: 6%

In an ideal world, what type of childcare solution best meets your family’s needs? (2,295 responses)

- Center-Based Programs: 69%
- Family Child Care: 11%
- Public School Preschool Programs: 5%
- In-Home Child Care (Nanny): 5%
- Loved Ones (Family/Friends): 5%

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