

STRUGGLING TO RECOVER:

The Impacts of COVID-19 on Louisiana Families with Young Children

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC) conducted a survey of Louisiana parents and guardians in the fall of 2020 in partnership with Agenda for Children, Louisiana Department of Education, New Orleans Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Urban League of Louisiana, and Women United of Southeast Louisiana. The survey focused on how Louisiana families with children under the age of 5 have been impacted by, and managed during, the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

This survey provides insights into the needs and challenges of families with young children in Louisiana, many of whom are struggling as the COVID-19 pandemic endures:

Even in an economy affected by COVID-19, families with young children continue to need child care to support parent employment or education, and parents must adjust schedules to fill child care gaps.

- Most responding parents in Louisiana were working or in school, full time and outside the home.
- More than three-quarters of families with young children relied on some type of formal child care outside the home.
- Parents, on average, reported their children were in child care for 39 hours per week.
- Almost two-thirds of parents experienced some sort of adjustment to their work or school schedule to provide child care during the pandemic.

Working families continue to rely on child care even in the face of reduced income, increased stress, and concern about the spread of COVID-19.

- The majority of parents in Louisiana reported the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted their lives and increased their stress level as a parent.
- Almost half of parents saw their family's monthly income decrease during the pandemic.
- Nearly one-fifth of parents reported their work or school hours have decreased compared to February 2020.
- Almost 1-in-6 parents reported another adult in their household lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- One-third of parents were concerned about their employment.
- Almost two-thirds of parents were concerned about the spread of COVID-19 through child care.

Families are struggling to afford child care and basic necessities, with child care costing the average Louisiana family almost \$10,000 a year.

- On average, families in Louisiana reported currently paying \$399 per child per month for child care — for a family with two children that would translate to \$9,568 per year.
- Nearly one-third of families received some type of subsidized child care, either through enrollment in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and/or a free child care program.
- Almost half of parents were concerned about being unable to afford child care due to the high cost.
- Nearly 1-in-2 parents worried about being able to afford their family's basic needs.

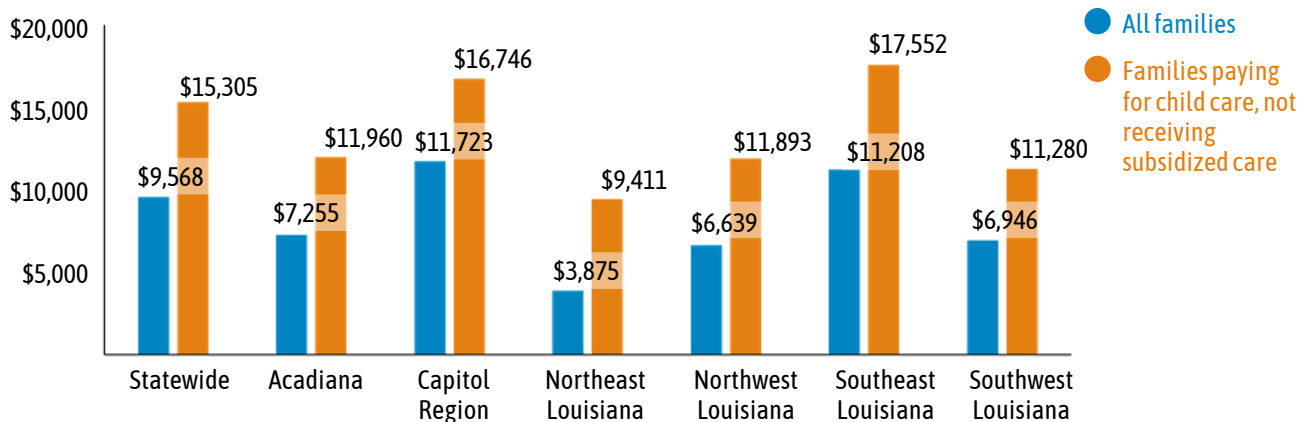
Economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic hit families of color and lower income families especially hard.

- Unemployment rates were nearly twice as high for Black/African American parents and nearly three times as high for parents with a family income below \$20,000 per year.
- Parents of color and parents with family incomes below \$50,000 per year were more likely to have seen their monthly income decrease.
- Black/African American and multiracial families and families with incomes below \$50,000 per year were more likely to have an adult in the household experiencing job loss due to COVID-19.
- Parents of color and parents with family incomes below \$50,000 expressed concern about being able to afford their family's basic needs at higher rates.

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Average Annual Cost of Child Care for Family with Two Children



Questions: How much do you pay for your current child care arrangement(s) per week? Please provide the typical dollar amount you pay per week for ALL of your children under age 5. If you pay a monthly rate, please divide the monthly rate by 4. / Do you receive a child care subsidy or are these child care arrangements provided at no cost/for free? Please check all that apply.

Note: Results for "families paying for child care, not receiving subsidized care" only include respondents paying at least \$1 and who indicated they are not receiving subsidized care.

WORKING FAMILIES CAN'T WAIT, THE TIME TO FUND CHILD CARE IS NOW

Louisiana's economic recovery from COVID-19 relies on working families, and, as these survey results show, working families rely on child care. To support all facets of the recovery, Louisiana must:

- **Increase funding for child care assistance at the state and local levels** to support both families struggling to afford child care for their young children and rebounding businesses who need access to a reliable workforce.
- **Maintain expanded eligibility for essential workers to the Child Care Assistance Program**, enabling parents in our most critical fields to afford quality care while they work.
- **Support the child care sector through public investments** to increase the availability of quality, reliable child care for working parents, keeping in mind health and safety precautions.
- **Direct any additional COVID-19 related federal investments toward supporting child care providers** with keeping their doors open and rates affordable as they balance increased health and safety requirements, higher operational costs, and lower enrollment capacities.