

NOW MORE THAN EVER

A Snapshot of How Louisiana Working Families Rely on Child Care

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC) conducted a now annual survey of Louisiana parents and guardians with children under the age of 5 in the fall of 2021 in partnership with Agenda for Children, Louisiana Department of Education, and Women United of Southeast Louisiana. The survey focused on the child care arrangements of surveyed families, including their needs and experiences related to child care.

Louisiana families with young children continue to rely on child care and make decisions about child care based on factors that support parent employment and education.

- Most responding parents were working or in school, full time and outside of the home.
 - The unemployment rate was twice as high for parents with a family income below \$20,000 per year.
- **Over 80%** of families with young children relied on some type of formal child care outside the home in 2021, an increase compared to 2020.
- Parents, on average, reported their children were in child care for **39 hours per week**.
- Parents indicated the main reasons for using their current child care arrangements were hours, trust in the provider, convenient location, and quality.
- Just **over half** of parents experienced some sort of adjustment to their work or school schedule to provide child care in the previous six months.
 - Parents with a family income below \$20,000 per year were twice as likely to have quit their job in order to care for their children.

The cost of child care remains high, with child care costing the average Louisiana family almost \$9,000 a year.

- On average, families in Louisiana reported currently paying **\$358 per child per month** for child care — for a family with two children, that would translate to **\$8,600 per year**.
 - For families paying for child care and not receiving any type of subsidized care, the average monthly cost of child care was **\$655 per child per month**, or **\$15,715 per year** for a family with two children.
- Nearly **60%** of families received some type of subsidized child care in 2021, either through enrollment in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and/or a free child care program, an increase compared to 2020.

Without subsidies for child care and other household essentials, working families with young children will struggle even more to afford basic necessities.

- **Almost half (49%)** of parents were concerned about being unable to afford child care.
- **Over 50%** of parents indicated having trouble paying for basic household expenses, including utilities, child care, food, and clothing, in the prior six months.
- **Over half** of parents claimed or planned to claim School Readiness Tax Credits for Child Care Expenses on their 2020 Louisiana tax return, and most reported receiving the monthly federal Child Tax Credit payments that began in July 2021.

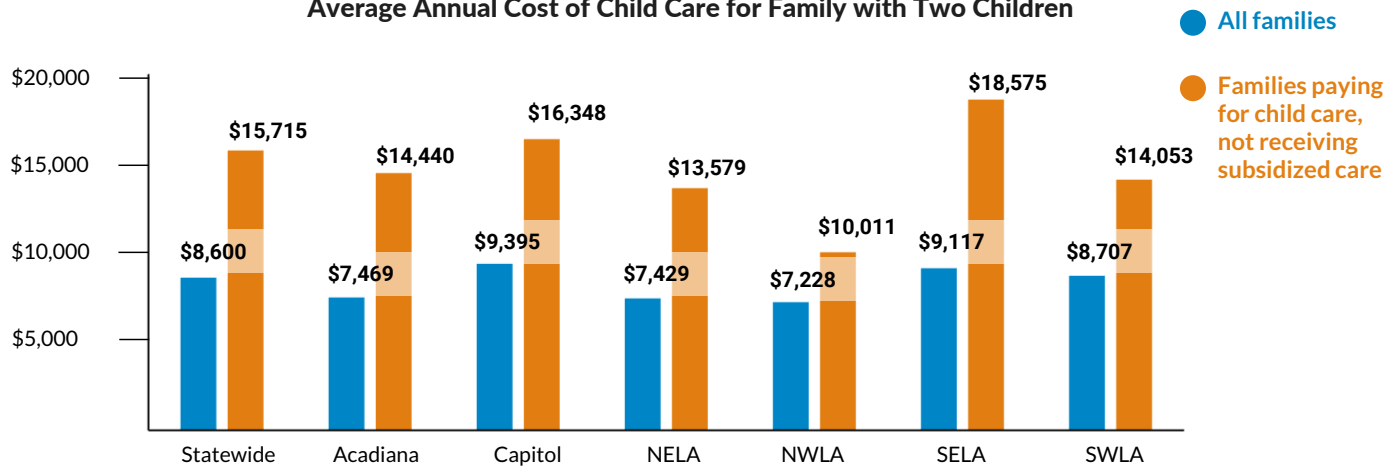
Many families still experience child care challenges due to COVID-19 and struggle to easily find child care.

- **Almost one-quarter** of parents said it was difficult to find their current child care arrangements.
- **Over 60%** of parents were concerned about the spread of COVID-19 through child care.
- **Over three-fourths** of parents reported having to take at least one day off from work in the prior three months because of a child care closure.

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Average Annual Cost of Child Care for Family with Two Children



Question: 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.

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.

LOUISIANA'S CONTINUED ECONOMIC SUCCESS RELIES ON WORKING FAMILIES' ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE CHILD CARE

These survey results again show working families rely on child care and how child care challenges impact workforce participation. To support working families and their employers, Louisiana must:

- **Increase state investments in early care and education to expand access to high-quality child care**, especially for children birth through age 3, which will prepare our students for a smart start in life, enable families to be productive in the workforce, and serve as an economic engine for local communities.
- **Continue to use federal stimulus and COVID-19 relief funds to stabilize the child care sector** to increase the availability of quality, reliable child care for working parents.
- **Encourage multiple streams of investment into the early care and education system**, including supporting local government efforts to generate revenue through both state enabling legislation and sufficient incentivizing investment into the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

LPIC developed and administered the Louisiana Child Care Parent Poll survey online through Survey Monkey from October 10, 2021, through November 3, 2021. Prospective respondents included any parent or guardian in Louisiana with at least one child under the age of 5 living in their home. Within the survey window, 2,028 responded to the survey, answering some or all of the survey questions. For questions where some survey respondents did not provide an answer, the included results percentages reflect calculations based only on the number of survey respondents providing an answer to the question. For example, if only 100 survey respondents answered a question, the results would reflect what percentage of those 100 respondents selected each answer.

