

OCTOBER 2022

# NEW YORK'S CHILD CARE CRISIS

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**New poll  
underscores the  
need for New York  
to invest in a high-  
quality universal  
child care system  
that will serve all  
families equitably**



**RAISING  
NEW YORK**



Access to high-quality child care is crucial to getting more New Yorkers back to work as the state continues its economic recovery amid the ongoing pandemic and persistent inflation.

Yet our latest poll found that across all racial groups, parents of young children encountered challenges accessing child care. What's more, nearly half (49%) of all parents said their child care situation was not very workable.

New York can and must do better in supporting our youngest learners on the path to a bright future.

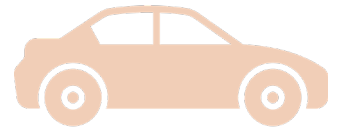
The poll findings underscore the urgent need for New York to invest in its child care infrastructure, including a universal system that is high-quality, accessible, and affordable for all New Yorkers.

## AMONG THE FINDINGS

- Parents across all racial groups indicated they have encountered challenges accessing child care. Additionally, Black parents were more likely to say they needed access to care during evenings and weekends and nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  (73%) of Black families reported having to travel more than 10 minutes to reach their child care program.
- Families from low-income households were more likely to consider cost when choosing a child care provider, and two in five indicated that their child does not attend a child care program because they are not able to afford it.
- Parents with children in child care are largely satisfied with their program across a variety of metrics. Yet Asian and Black families are much more likely to say they have family needs that are not provided by their current program.
- Across all racial groups, parents said that issues with child care have affected their ability to attend work, school, or other commitments.
- There is broad support for investments to ensure that all children have access to a high-quality child care program, including minimizing costs for parents and ensuring that early educators earn a family-sustaining wage.
- Nearly two thirds of parents (63%) had heard nothing or little about the Empire State Child Tax credit. Parents reported that if they were to receive a child tax credit, they would use it for basic necessities including child care, housing, and utilities. This underscores the critical need for New York to expand access to families with children under age 4.

# FINDING I:

**Parents across all racial groups indicated they have encountered challenges accessing child care. Additionally, Black parents were more likely to say they needed access to care during evenings and weekends and nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  (73%) of Black families reported having to travel more than 10 minutes to reach their child care program.**



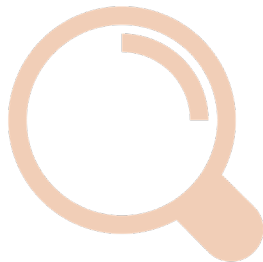
Across all racial groups, about one in three families found it challenging to find their current child care program.

**33%** ASIAN/OTHER

**34%** BLACK

**29%** LATINX

**35%** WHITE

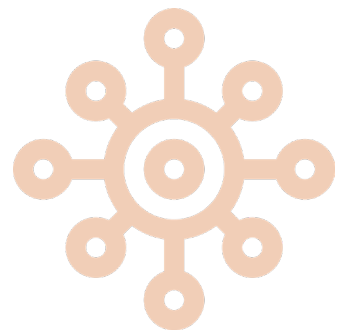


Black and Latinx families are far more likely to go through a child care resource and referral organization to connect with a child care provider, underscoring the need for these services to connect families with providers.

**33%** BLACK

**30%** LATINX

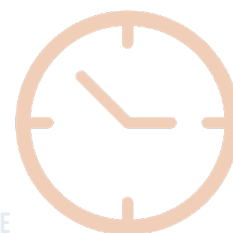
**18%** WHITE



Black parents and parents from low-income backgrounds were the only groups to report needing child care during evenings, overnight, or on weekends.

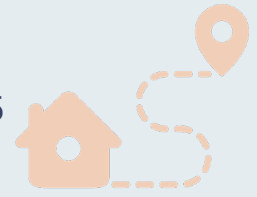
**8%** BLACK

**7%** LOW-INCOME



*\*No Asian/Other respondents indicated they relied on a child care resource and referral organization to connect with a child care provider*

The majority of Black families (62%) and half of Latinx families report a commute of 10 to 20 minutes to their child care program, while Asian families overwhelmingly (85%) say their commute is less than 5 minutes and White families tending to be in 5 to 10 minutes (38%) or 10 to 20 minutes (42%).



	Asian/other	Black	Latinx	White
<b>Less than a 5-minute commute</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Between a 5- and 10-minute commute</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Between a 10- and 20-minute commute</b>	-	<b>62%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Between a 20- and 30-minute commute</b>	-	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>A 30-minute commute or more</b>	-	-	<b>8%</b>	<b>3%</b>





## FINDING 2:

**Families from low-income households were more likely to consider cost when choosing a child care provider, and two in five indicated that their child does not attend a child care program because they are not able to afford it.**



Parents from low-income households were more likely to report that cost is among their top two considerations when making decisions about child care.



Two in five families from low-income backgrounds indicated that their child does not attend child care because they were not able to afford it.

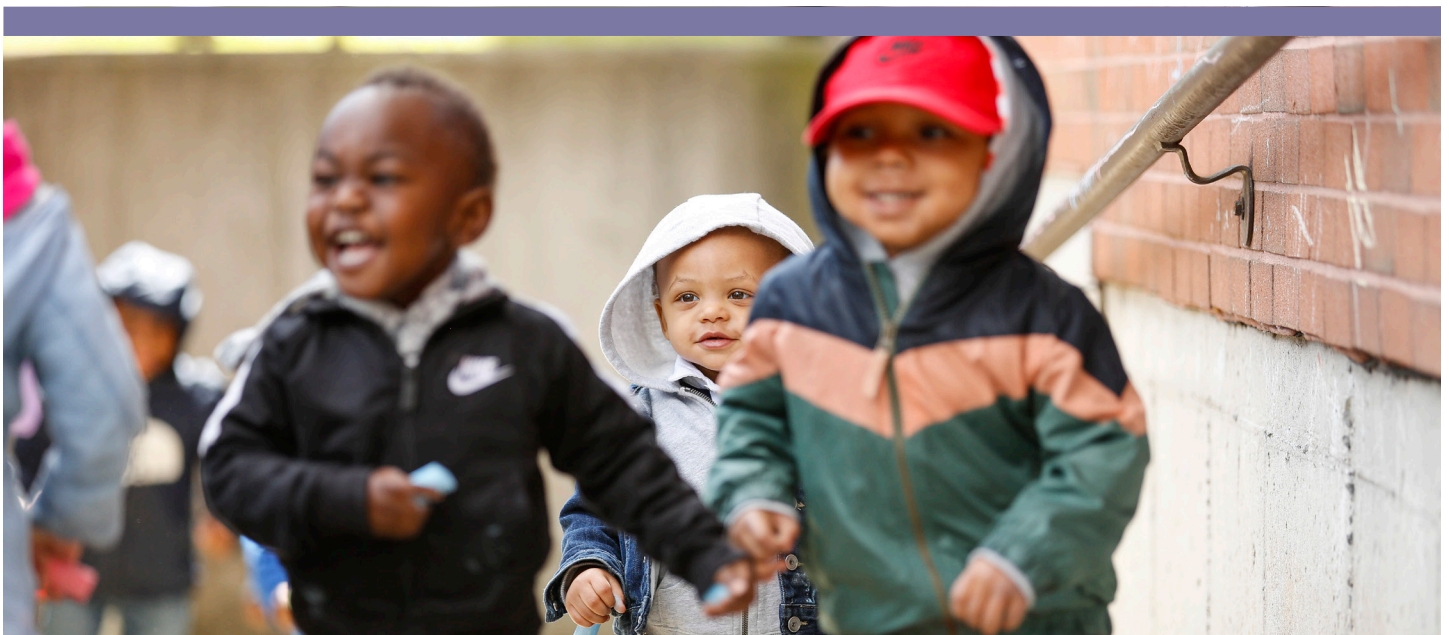


## FINDING 3:

**Parents with children in child care are largely satisfied with their program across a variety of metrics. Yet Asian and Black families are much more likely to say they have family needs that are not provided by their current program.**

*Percent of parents who strongly agree:*

	All Parents
<b>I feel that my child is safe, healthy, and well cared for in their current child care program</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>My child's child care program provides hours of care that work for my family</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>My child's child care program is in a location that is convenient for my family</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>My child's child care program is helping my child to be developmentally on track for kindergarten</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>I feel that my child's child care program is high quality [they are in an environment that allows them to mentally, physically, and socially thrive]</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>My child's child care program includes teachers who share my family's culture and/or language</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>The cost of my child's child care program is manageable for my family</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>I feel that my child is in a high-quality child care setting and learning daily</b>	<b>50%</b>





Asian and Black families are much more likely to say they have family needs that are not provided by child care program.

**41%** ASIAN/OTHER

**38%** BLACK

**4%** LATINX

**18%** WHITE



Across racial groups, parents indicated that they did not participate in a voluntary home-visiting program (such as Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families NY, and ParentChild+) because they do not know how to access a home-visiting program.

**43%** ASIAN/OTHER

**30%** BLACK

**24%** LATINX

**28%** WHITE



One in five respondents indicated that their child is eligible for special education or early intervention services but is not receiving them. Below are the reasons they reported their child is not receiving these services:

	Asian/ Other	Black	Latinx	White	Low- income	Not low- income
<b>Waiting for an evaluation to take place</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Did not think the services would benefit my child</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Was not given the option of online services</b>	-	<b>25%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Waiting for an available therapist</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Is not available in my geographic region</b>	-	<b>12%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Was discontinued by my provider</b>	-	<b>12%</b>	-	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Did not have the technology to participate in online services</b>	-	-	<b>6%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>9%</b>	-	-	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>None of these apply to my family</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>	<b>14%</b>	-	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>4%</b>





## FINDING 4:

### Across all racial groups, parents said that issues with child care have affected their ability to attend work, school, or other commitments.

41% of respondents reported that issues with child care have affected their ability to attend work, school, or other commitments two or more times in the last 30 days. These figures were higher for Black (46%) and Latinx (45%) respondents.

	Asian/Other	Black	Latinx	White	Low-income	Not low-income
<b>Once or less</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>2 to 5 times</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>5 times or more</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>2 or more times</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>40%</b>

For a variety of reasons, Black and Latinx children were more likely to miss out on child care.

	Asian/Other	Black	Latinx	White	Low-income	Not low-income
<b>My child was sick or sent home from child care</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>My child care provider was temporarily unable to care for my child</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>I could not afford changes in costs</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>My child care provider closed or ended care</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>None of these have applied to me in the last 30 days</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>42%</b>

## FINDING 5:

**There is broad support for investments to ensure that all children have access to a high-quality child care program, including minimizing costs for parents and ensuring that early educators earn a family-sustaining wage.**

Support for the following policies was consistently strong across racial and income groups.

**98%** 

**Ensuring that all children have access to a high-quality child care program in a setting and location that works for their family**

**98%** 

**Ensuring that all children attend child care in a setting in which their social, emotional, and physical development are prioritized 98%**

**96%** 

**Ensuring that families don't pay more than 7% of their income for child care**

**98%** 

**Ensuring that teachers in early education programs earn family-sustaining wages**

**93%** 

**Creating a plan to achieve access to affordable high-quality child care for infants and toddlers for all families who want it within the next five to ten years**

**93%** 

**Expanding access to child care for New Yorkers who live in "child care deserts" — geographic areas where families lack access to high-quality affordable child care for infants and toddlers**

**92%** 

**Working to encourage and support early childhood education programs that are aware and respectful of different cultures and include languages and customs from many cultures**

**96%** 

**Investing more into early intervention services, such as speech therapy and preschool special education evaluations and services for families with infants and toddlers**

**92%** 

**Expanding voluntary maternal, infant, and early childhood home visits to help expectant parents and parents of toddlers and infants connect with services and resources in the comfort of their homes**



## FINDING 6:

**Nearly two thirds of parents (63%) had heard nothing or little about the Empire State Child Tax credit. Parents reported that if they were to receive a child tax credit, they would use it for basic necessities including child care, housing, and utilities. This underscores the critical need for New York to expand access to families with children under age 4.**

New York families with young children indicated that if they were to receive a child tax credit they would use it to cover basic expenses such as food, housing, and utilities.

	Asian/ Other	Black	Latinx	White	Low- income	Not low- income
To help with housing costs for my family (rent, mortgage payment, etc.)	28%	61%	42%	50%	55%	44%
To help with child care costs	45%	46%	43%	49%	42%	49%
To help with my family's utility bills (heat, electricity, internet, etc.)	23%	61%	36%	47%	50%	41
To help with the cost of my child's food or baby formula	40%	45%	43%	38%	42%	39%
To help with the cost of extracurricular activities (sports, music lessons, after school programs, etc.) for my child	47%	32%	38%	29%	28%	36%
To help with the cost of educational programs (tutoring, etc.) for my child	33%	41%	32%	24%	30%	29%
Other	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	-

## CHILD CARE POLL RECOMMENDATIONS



### **Lower the cost of child care for families by increasing and expanding eligibility for subsidies.**

Child care fees continue to be a financial burden for families. New York must systemically lower child care costs so that families can meet the increasing costs of housing, food, transportation, and other basic needs.



### **Adapt a culturally responsive quality rating system for all child care programs.**

High-quality, safe, and culturally responsive child care must be part of any effort to expand child care equitably. A universal, transparent quality rating and improvement system is needed to ensure that all families, especially families of color, immigrant families, and others who have been historically marginalized, have access to child care programs that are inclusive and center their needs and values.

### **Increase access to and capacity of high-quality child care programs that offer non-traditional hours of care.**

Parents who work or attend school in the evenings, overnight, and during the weekends face considerable challenges finding reliable child care. Child care programs offering non-traditional hours of care are a critical tool for supporting the economic and educational goals of families, especially families who face economic barriers to success.



### **Increase provider wages so that all early childhood care professionals can earn a sustainable and competitive salary.**

The recent pandemic has shown that our economy depends on services that child care professionals provide. Yet many caregivers do not earn family sustaining wages, making it difficult for them to stay in the sector. Decades of under-investment in the child care sector has led to inequities that must be remedied. We must permanently increase wages for child care professionals.



### **Expand coverage of the Empire State Child Credit to children under 4.**

The first three years of life are an especially rapid period of growth and brain development, and of particular vulnerability to the effects of food insecurity, housing instability, and other experiences of economic insecurity. Tax credits help to increase economic security and directly combat the impacts of poverty. By expanding access to the Empire State Child Credit, New York State can disrupt harmful patterns and set infants and toddlers on the path to healthy growth and development from the very start.



### **Expand access to and coverage of Home Visiting programs and Early Intervention services.**

High-quality home visiting programs provide early child screening and connect parents to important resources and supports. Access to home visiting programs is especially important for families impacted by economic insecurity, and for Black mothers and infants, who are facing emergency levels of mortality and illness in our state. Early Intervention provides critical services such as evaluations and therapies for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities. A lack of available therapists, particularly in under-resourced rural and urban communities, has perpetuated existing racial inequities for families who need to receive evaluations and services.



### **Invest in a cradle-to-career state longitudinal data system.**

Data should inform policy decisions. Current data infrastructure is insufficient for tracking social supports and addressing the complex needs that are unique to the diversity of New York. Investing in a cradle-to-career or P-20 statewide longitudinal data system will help policymakers design data-informed policies to support all New Yorkers. Such a system will provide actionable information about supports for infants and toddlers, school transitions, and life outcomes for every child in the state.





**Raising NY is a diverse statewide coalition of parent, early childhood, education, civil rights, business, and health organizations dedicated to advocating for policies and systems changes that will benefit families of infants and toddlers.**

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