

BRIEF

# No Choice

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF UNMET CHILD CARE NEEDS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE & PAID LEAVE ACCESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The COVID-19 pandemic shrunk child care availability, pushing many working parents, including many women of color and women who are paid low wages, out of formal employment.
- Though unemployment assistance and paid (family, medical, and sick) leave can buffer income losses when parents are unable to work because they are caring for their children, the reach and generosity of these programs have been insufficient and uneven across states and territories.
- Federal and state policymakers can take the following steps to address and mitigate working parents' unmet child care needs:
  - Provide additional emergency and longer-term child care funding and ensure safe school re-openings;
  - Establish, expand, and extend federal and state paid leave programs; and
  - Align emergency and permanent unemployment assistance with the lived experiences of working parents.

### WORKING PARENTS FACE DAUNTING CHILD CARE RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The deadly COVID-19 pandemic upended the lives of working families with drastic and uneven effects on employment, child care, and in-person schooling. More than nine months after economic activity abruptly shrunk in response to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the United States economy has nearly 10 million (9.8 million) fewer jobs than before the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Following public health guidance and orders, some working parents began to work from home where possible, while others, including

millions of essential workers, had no choice but to continue to work away from home.<sup>2</sup>

For many working or unemployed parents of dependent children, widespread child care and in-person school closures made searching for work and securing formal employment virtually impossible. Many other families have opted to keep children home out of concerns that alternative care arrangements that may not meet new public health standards. As a result of the economic turmoil, child care providers have faced a steep drop in demand, and some providers receiving state subsidies report that their costs have increased even as enrollment levels plummeted, and that state supports have been insufficient.<sup>3</sup>

As long as the pandemic is underway, in the absence of adequate, safe, and accessible child care and in-person schooling for all who need it, strong unemployment assistance and paid leave programs can keep families afloat until they have viable options to both return to employment and access needed child care. At the same time, strong investments in the existing child care system can ensure that safe, affordable care will be available when parents can return to employment.

### CHILD CARE SHORTFALLS DRAMATICALLY WORSENERED DURING THE PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States spent far less as a percentage of economic output than peer nations on child care,<sup>4</sup> never having ensured adequate child care for all who need it. The pandemic has dramatically exacerbated these shortfalls.<sup>5</sup> Income eligibility limits and insufficient public funding have kept child care out of reach for low and middle-income families alike.<sup>6</sup> As the pandemic took hold in the U.S., child care providers—including Head Start and Early Head Start programs—and in-person schooling shuttered or moved online. As of June 2020,<sup>7</sup> 47 percent of families with children under 5 years of age lost the child care they used before the pandemic, according to one study.<sup>8</sup> Unsurprisingly, survey data from July 2020 indicate that the majority of parents who quit their jobs during the

early months of the pandemic (52 percent) did so due to child care provider or school closures.<sup>9</sup> Nearly a year after the onset of the pandemic,<sup>10</sup> parents continue to provide child care at rates significantly above pre-pandemic levels.<sup>11</sup>

As of January 2021, most children are not eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech,<sup>12</sup> Moderna,<sup>13</sup> Oxford-AstraZeneca,<sup>14</sup> or Johnson & Johnson (pending FDA approval)<sup>15</sup> COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>16</sup> Many parents may be reluctant to send unimmunized children to school.<sup>17</sup>

## UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE & PAID LEAVE CAN MITIGATE INCOME LOSSES FOR FAMILIES WITH UNMET CHILD CARE NEEDS

Earnings replacement programs, like unemployment assistance and paid leave, can help offset income losses until parents no longer need to care for their children during work hours and can return to work. Unfortunately, pre-pandemic unemployment assistance and leave policies provided insufficient access to adequate income replacement and failed to secure job protection for workers with new and unexpected caregiving responsibilities. Recognizing increased needs, Congress enacted emergency relief in March 2020 which has been extended through subsequent legislation.

### *Earnings Replacement Programs in the U.S. Were Inadequate Before the Pandemic*

For 85 years, the federal-state Unemployment Insurance (UI) program has been a key support for tens of millions of involuntarily unemployed jobseekers. Yet, since 1975, the program has failed to serve even a simple majority of unemployed workers, and in recent years has supported less than 30 percent of unemployed workers.<sup>18</sup> UI can be particularly challenging for working parents to access. In many states, the program requires eligible parents to have child care arrangements in place while searching for work. Additionally, a number of states exclude workers who must separate from employment due to child care obligations.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the U.S. entered the pandemic with existing UI infrastructure in all states plus the District of Columbia (D.C.), Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In contrast, when the public health crisis began, there was no national paid sick, family, or medical leave program in place for families to turn to.<sup>20</sup> In one analysis of 22 countries with high living standards, the U.S. alone lacked a national paid sick leave guarantee.<sup>21</sup>

Among 36 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the U.S. is one of only seven that offers no national child or family caregiving leave program.<sup>22</sup> At the start of the pandemic, just nine state (including D.C.) had paid family and medical leave programs. However, only six state programs (including D.C.) were established early enough to have paid out benefits in 2020.<sup>23</sup> Pre-pandemic, only 15 states (including D.C. and Puerto Rico) mandated paid sick leave for workers; later in 2020, two more states established paid sick leave programs—Colorado (emergency program) and New York (permanent program); in January 2021, two additional states—Maine and Nevada—established permanent paid sick leave programs (See Figure 1).

### *Congress Recognized the Need for Robust Unemployment Assistance & Paid Leave in the Pandemic*

In March 2020, Congress enacted temporary expansions to unemployment assistance through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act<sup>24</sup> and established the nation's first paid leave programs for non-federal employees through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).<sup>25</sup> Before the programs expired in December 2020, FFCRA provided two weeks paid sick leave for workers' COVID-19 related needs (at the regular rate of pay), two workweeks paid sick leave to care for others' COVID-19 related health needs (at two-thirds regular rate of pay), and ten workweeks of paid leave for workers who had unmet child care needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic (at two-thirds regular rate of pay).<sup>26</sup> Leave was provided through an employer mandate with benefit costs fully offset through a tax credit.

The two programs covered certain public employers, and private employers with fewer than 500 employees, though it included carve-outs for many small employers and essential workers.<sup>28</sup> Up to approximately 60 million private sector workers may have had access to sick leave.<sup>29</sup> However, one survey indicated that barely a quarter (28 percent) of covered firms have actively made use of FFCRA as of early May 2020.<sup>30</sup> One analysis estimates that a mere two weeks of sick leave had the effect of increasing the average daily hours at home per day by 4.2 percent (compared to pre-FFCRA values).<sup>31</sup> Another study found that in the spring of 2020, states where employees gained access to FFCRA paid sick leave had a statistically significant decrease of approximately 400 fewer new cases per state per day.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, the paid sick leave mandate expired on December 31,

2020, though the tax credit was extended through March 31, 2021 under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.<sup>33</sup>

Just nine days after enacting the FFCRA, the CARES Act grew the dollar amount, duration, and coverage of unemployment assistance, quickly delivering aid to families and stabilizing the economy as a whole.<sup>34</sup> The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC20) provided a \$600 per week unemployment assistance boost through late July 2020, helped support 30 million workers and their families, and kept poverty from rising,<sup>35</sup> particularly for Black and Latinx people.<sup>36,37</sup> The formation of a complementary Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program expanded unemployment assistance to a wider array of workers, including many self-employed and gig workers, and some caregivers who were unable to work due to COVID-19 related reasons.<sup>38</sup> A temporary Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program and full relief for the state share of permanent Extended Benefits (EB) together helped provide months of additional benefits to many workers.<sup>39</sup> These provisions have been extended through March 14, 2021 under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, and a new \$300 weekly benefit increase (FPUC21) was made available for the final days of 2020 through March 14, 2021.<sup>40</sup>

## DESPITE RESPONSE EFFORTS, THE PANDEMIC AMPLIFIED PRE-EXISTING SHORTCOMINGS OF EARNINGS REPLACEMENT PROGRAMS

Despite relatively timely congressional action in March 2020, the reach and generosity of unemployment assistance and paid leave have been insufficient and uneven across states and territories during the pandemic, due to existing structural limitations, the lack of a unified federal and state response to the crisis, and the limited reach of emergency relief programs.

States failed to maximize opportunities under federal law to expand unemployment assistance in the following ways:

- At the beginning of the crisis, several states refused to relax work search requirements (the requirements that claimants actively look for work to receive unemployment benefits) for UI eligibility,<sup>41</sup> defying FFCRA<sup>42</sup> and the CARES Act's<sup>43</sup> nudges to ease these requirements. Most of these states were eventually prodded into suspending work search requirements<sup>44</sup> as public pressure mounted.<sup>45</sup>

- Current Department of Labor guidance makes parents who choose to keep their children at home from school ineligible for PUA if schools have an in-person option.<sup>46</sup>
- As of late January 2021, the majority of states will not pay state unemployment assistance benefits in cases where the parent cannot work because they believe that available in-person school is unsafe for their child.<sup>47</sup>

However, individuals whose primary caregiving responsibilities prevent them from being able to work from home “may be considered unable or unavailable for work” and could be eligible for PUA benefits.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, if a school system is providing a combination of online and in-person instruction, and an individual “must stay home to care for the child on the days of remote instruction, the individual may be eligible for paid leave benefits under FFCRA.”<sup>49</sup>

The FFCRA provided limited paid sick leave and family and medical leave for workers with caregiving responsibilities, saving lives while preserving the crucial connection between employer and employee that can hasten an economic recovery.<sup>50</sup> The lack of a prior permanent paid leave law likely led to strikingly low take-up rates of these benefits and potentially larger use of unemployment assistance. According to a Bipartisan Policy Center nationally representative survey of workers claiming unemployment insurance conducted in July 2020:

- The vast majority of workers (94 percent) claiming unemployment assistance—including state programs, PUA, and EB—either were not, or were not sure, if they were offered by their employer the opportunity to use paid leave instead.<sup>51</sup>
- Nearly two out of three unemployed adults (63 percent) reported they would be somewhat (29 percent) or very (34 percent) likely to return to work sooner if they knew they had access to paid leave.<sup>52</sup>
- Paid family leave would be especially beneficial to people of color: 73 percent of Black and 67 percent of Latinx workers claiming unemployment benefits (compared to 61 percent of white workers) say they would be more likely to return to work if they had access to paid family leave.<sup>53</sup>

## THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH & ECONOMIC CRISES HAVE EXACERBATED EXISTING CAREGIVING INEQUITIES

The COVID-19 crises have exacerbated many existing racial, gender, and economic inequities—particularly related to caregiving. Even before the pandemic, women, particularly women of color, disproportionately shouldered caregiving responsibilities.<sup>54</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic, poor economy, and inadequate policy responses have shrunk already insufficient child care availability, pushing many working parents, especially women of color and low-paid women, out of formal employment.

### WOMEN, ESPECIALLY WOMEN OF COLOR, DISPROPORTIONATELY SHOULDER CAREGIVING INEQUITIES

Women, including women of color, disproportionately shoulder the burden of balancing the responsibilities of work and child-rearing. Even pre-pandemic, it was difficult for working mothers to balance work with child care responsibilities. This is especially true for women of color, since Black, Latinx, and indigenous parents are more likely than their white counterparts to experience job disruptions related to child care that could drastically affect their financial stability.<sup>55</sup>

- In 2019, the labor force participation rate for women with children under age 6 (66.4 percent) was far below the rate for women with children age 6 to 17 (76.8 percent).<sup>56</sup>
- Working mothers were twice as likely to say that parenting has interfered with their career advancement than fathers.<sup>57</sup>
- Among financially secure two-parent families with children, parents tended to divide responsibilities, with one taking on a greater share of caregiving responsibilities, and the other prioritizing work.<sup>58</sup> In male-female couples, mothers are more likely to take on caregiving duties.<sup>59</sup>

Due to the reduced availability of child care outside the home, the U.S. is teetering on the brink of effacing the limited workplace gains that women—especially women of color—have made in the past few decades:<sup>60</sup>

- One study found that the loss of full-time child care increased the likelihood of unemployment for mothers far more than for fathers during the pandemic.<sup>61</sup>

- People working low-paid jobs are more likely to work jobs that must be done in person and often cannot afford to miss a paycheck.<sup>62</sup> When schools and child care centers close and one parent is forced to stay home, families with low or moderate incomes can face financial devastation.<sup>63</sup>
- Pre-existing wealth<sup>64</sup> and unemployment disparities<sup>65</sup> left many families of color, particularly Black families, with fewer buffers to weather economic shocks or take time off even though they are far more likely to experience job loss.<sup>66</sup>
- Working mothers of color work at higher rates and are more likely to supply the primary source of income in their households than white mothers.<sup>67</sup> In 2017, 68.3 percent of Black mothers and 41 percent of Latinx mothers provided the primary economic support for their families, compared to 38.6 percent of white mothers.<sup>68</sup>
- Black and Latinx mothers disproportionately work low-paid jobs with unpredictable schedules, and as a result, may often struggle to find affordable child care that aligns with those schedules.<sup>69</sup>

### THE PANDEMIC & POOR ECONOMY HAVE SHRUNK ACCESS TO CHILD CARE & EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN

Women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 because of pre-existing structural inequalities:<sup>70</sup>

- Women—especially Black, Latinx, and indigenous women—hold the majority of essential work positions,<sup>71</sup> and are thus disproportionately at risk in the pandemic.<sup>72</sup>
- Women tend to hold a far greater number of jobs than men in sectors like hospitality, health care, and education<sup>73</sup>—sectors which suffered the largest job losses between February and December 2020.<sup>74</sup>
- In December 2020, 100 percent of the net job loss was held by women, overwhelmingly Black and Latinx women.<sup>75</sup>
- Overall, women represented more than half of all net job losses in 2020 (55 percent).<sup>76</sup>
- Workplaces tend to penalize women who elect to work fewer hours or need more scheduling flexibility due to child care responsibilities.<sup>77</sup>

Child care workers, especially the 40 percent who are women of color,<sup>78</sup> have struggled as well. An April 2020 survey found that 60 percent of licensed child care providers had closed.<sup>79</sup> A July 2020 survey found that 88 percent of self-identified “minority-owned” providers have been forced to resort to furloughs, layoffs, and/

or pay cuts, compared to 73 percent of all providers.<sup>80</sup> A November 2020 survey of child care providers found that nearly half of respondents knew of multiple providers who had closed in their communities; 44 percent of remaining providers were uncertain about how much longer they could stay open.<sup>81</sup>

## DESPITE EMERGENCY PROGRAMS, UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE & PAID LEAVE POLICIES COULD DO FAR MORE TO SUPPORT CAREGIVERS

Inadequate and uneven state and federal policy responses have left parents and other caregivers with limited access to critical earning replacements, particularly unemployment assistance and paid leave, during a time when caregiving responsibilities often made paid work impractical. Even with schools expected to reopen in large numbers in the first and second quarters of 2021 and immunization efforts underway—likely reaching teachers in the coming months in many states<sup>82</sup>—many working parents will face daunting child care challenges for the foreseeable future.

Many parents will also continue to face challenges navigating the complicated federal, state, and local patchwork of permanent and emergency earnings replacement programs and their intersections with child care. To help working parents navigate these barriers, **policymakers should fund cross-program outreach and education** that is culturally-informed and accessible in multiple languages and formats. Other program-specific changes will also be important for ensuring working parents are able to both work and have their caregiving needs met.

For example, not only do working parents of school-age children frequently require child care for younger children, but daily and annual work hours frequently exceed school hours, requiring wraparound care—before care, after care, and summer care. In addition to taking public health measures that would allow the safe reopening of all preschools, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, the recommendations below would help address this care crisis in the short-run and beyond.

### CHILD CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

Increasing funding to allow child care providers to safely open—and stay open—would both stabilize the sector

and ease the burden on working families that rely upon child care to accept necessary in-person jobs.

#### To address immediate needs,

- Tens of billions in federal emergency child care relief is needed. The ideas in the Child Care is Essential Act, which calls for \$50 billion in appropriations for the Child Care Stabilization Fund to award grants to child care facilities, and other proposals could help address this need.<sup>83</sup> To date, the CARES Act provided just \$3.5 billion for child care funding.<sup>84</sup> The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided an additional \$10 billion in child care funding.<sup>85</sup> Other proposals would provide additional child care funding.<sup>86, 87, 88, 89</sup>
- Payment rates for publicly-subsidized child care should be enhanced at the state level, as North Carolina and Illinois have done, recognizing child care providers as frontline workers.<sup>90</sup> Subsidy rates could better match actual operating costs and reflect enrollment instead of attendance, and states could provide more grants to providers, including those investing in the workforce.<sup>91</sup>
- State funding should also support providers who are closed or partially open and cover co-payments and tuition costs for families, particularly families with low incomes.<sup>92</sup>

#### To address needs over the longer term,

- Quality, affordable child care should be guaranteed for all children who need it, with a particular focus on combating racial and gender inequities in the child care sector. All child care jobs should offer adequate compensation, safety, and opportunity for advancement. Provisions in the proposed Child Care for Working Families Act likely would come close to accomplishing both of those goals.<sup>93</sup>

### PAID LEAVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Establishing and improving federal and state paid sick, family, and medical leave programs would allow working parents and other caregivers to maintain employment and adequate income while caring for children and others. Equitable, inclusive, and robust paid leave programs can improve the economic security of workers and their families, and support greater health and child development outcomes.<sup>94</sup> Paid leave may have large effects on children in their earliest years of life—a time when a minimum income<sup>95</sup> and parental care<sup>96</sup> may be especially consequential. Paid sick leave protects community health by providing workers the ability to take time off when they are ill.<sup>97, 98</sup>

### To address immediate needs,

- The FFCRA's employer mandate for paid leave should be reinstated and expanded. The latest COVID-19 relief package, passed December 27, 2020, does not extend the requirement that employers provide emergency paid sick and family leave but instead allows employers and self-employed individuals to claim tax credits for voluntarily-provided emergency paid leave through March 31, 2021. The FFCRA paid leave mandate should be reinstated and extended to large employers, essential workers, all federal employees, and caregivers of adults,<sup>99</sup> through the end of 2021 and trigger off only as public health conditions warrant.
- Unmet child care needs should constitute as qualifying events for state and local paid leave programs, as several state paid leave programs, including New York's Paid Leave for COVID-19 law,<sup>100</sup> have done.

### To address needs over the longer term,

- Workers should earn sick leave of at least one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked, and emergency paid sick leave without accrual requirements in the event of public health emergencies. Provisions in the Healthy Families Act<sup>101</sup> and the PAID Leave Act<sup>102</sup> would together accomplish these goals.
- More paid family and medical leave programs should be created at the state level, as ten states already have, including recent additions like Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Colorado (see Figure 1).
- At least three months of annual paid family and medical leave should be guaranteed nationally, along with anti-retaliation protections, job security upon return from leave, implemented as a gender-neutral policy with additional weeks for single parents,<sup>103</sup> and set progressive wage replacement levels and eligibility criteria that allow low-paid workers to take needed leave.<sup>104</sup> A bill in the model of the FAMILY Act, to provide workers up to 12 or more weeks of paid family leave and cover individuals that the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leaves out could reduce the number of families who fall into poverty from taking unpaid leave through the FMLA by 75 percent, according to one study.<sup>105</sup>

## UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving state UI and the federal PUA programs to align with the lived realities of working parents would both stabilize incomes for unemployed parents (especially

mothers of color)<sup>106</sup>—while maintaining labor force attachment.<sup>107</sup>

### To address immediate needs,

- The PUA, PEUC, and full federal EB funding should be extended through 2021 and programs' expiration should be tied to economic conditions.<sup>108</sup> These three policies are currently set to expire or phaseout as of March 15, 2021.
- The PUA program should cover individuals who face increased caregiving responsibilities due to the partial closing or reduced capacity operation of child care facilities, unaffordable dependent care expenses, or health risks from attending school or child care. The Support Working Families Act of 2020 would ensure this expansion.<sup>109</sup>
- Primary caregivers who lack access to adequate and safe child care—including through in-person schooling—should be exempted from work search requirements in all federally funded unemployment assistance programs.<sup>110</sup>
- UI work search requirements should be suspended until the end of the public health crisis, as states including Arizona<sup>111</sup> and California<sup>112</sup> have. Some states that have temporarily suspended work search requirements will reinstate them in December 2020 or January 2021. Some states, like Texas, that reinstated work search requirements at the height of the economic and public health crises,<sup>113</sup> have not waived those requirements for people at higher risk for COVID-19, potentially forcing workers to choose between unsafe work conditions and a loss of benefits.<sup>114</sup>
- Earnings disregards should be increased to ensure that people working part-time while searching for suitable child care or full-time work continue receiving partial unemployment assistance.<sup>115</sup>
- States should institute and enhance their UI good cause provisions to apply to parents with unmet child care needs or school closures. Similarly, "able and available" and suitable work provisions should build in flexibility to respond to working parents' child care needs.

### To address needs over the longer term,

- A Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) should be established to help jobseekers who are ineligible for or would qualify for a lower UI benefit. As we have proposed elsewhere, a JSA would help jobseekers obtain employment and attach or reattach to the labor market through job-search assistance, training programs, and addressing structural barriers to employment.<sup>116</sup> The JSA should include automatic

extensions and enhancements at the national level, triggered by economic indicators.<sup>117</sup>

- All state UI programs should be required to have broadly applicable good cause provisions to comply with federal laws. Rhode Island, for instance, expressly lists the “need to care for children due to school/daycare closures” as an example of possible good cause for refusing work.<sup>118</sup>
- Similarly, all state programs should be required to build flexibility into UI “able and available” provisions. For example, California allows exemptions from these provisions for claimants who have young children and states that they must spend time caring for<sup>119</sup> in contrast to other states’ provisions that categorically exclude caregiving responsibilities as valid circumstances for determining unavailability.

- UI’s automatic stabilizer features should be improved so that when future recessions hit into effect, unemployed workers can receive enhanced benefits quickly, without waiting for Congress to act.<sup>120</sup>
- States who have not done so should increase the maximum duration of state regular compensation to at least 26 weeks, which 41 states have done.<sup>121</sup>

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Please refer any questions, suggestions, and other comments to [gcpiesoi@georgetown.edu](mailto:gcpiesoi@georgetown.edu).

## APPENDIX

**Figure 1.** Summary of Key Unemployment Insurance & Paid Leave Provisions for Working Parents, by State

State	Unemployment Insurance				Paid Leave	
	Work Search Reqs. Suspended	Eligibility if Schools & Child Care Unavailable	Standard Weekly Benefit Amount	At Least 26 Weeks of Assistance	Family & Medical Lewave Program	Sick Leave
AL	No	No	\$45 - \$275	No	N/A	N/A
AK	<a href="#">Partial</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$56 - \$370+	<a href="#">Yes*</a>	N/A	N/A
AZ	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$119 - \$240	<a href="#">Yes*</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
AR	No	No	\$81 - \$451	No	N/A	N/A
CA	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$40 - \$450	<a href="#">Yes*</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
CO	No	No	\$25 - \$618	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
CT	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$15 - \$649+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes#</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
DE	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$20 - \$400	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
DC	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$50 - \$444	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
FL	No	No	\$32 - \$275	No	N/A	N/A
GA	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$55 - \$365	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
HI	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$5 - \$648	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
ID	<a href="#">Partial</a>	No	\$72 - \$448	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A
IL	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$51 - \$484+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
IN	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$37 - \$390	Yes*	N/A	N/A
IA	<a href="#">Partial</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$72 - \$481+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
KS	<a href="#">Partial</a>	No	\$122 - \$488	<a href="#">Yes*</a>	N/A	N/A
KY	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$39 - \$569	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
LA	<a href="#">Partial</a>	No	\$10 - \$247	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
ME	<a href="#">Partial</a>	No	\$77 - \$445+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
MD	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$50 - \$430	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
MA	<a href="#">Partial</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$98 - \$823+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes#</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
MI	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$150 - \$362+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
MN	<a href="#">Partial</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$28 - \$740	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
MS	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$30 - \$235	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
MO	No	No	\$35 - \$320	No	N/A	N/A
MT	<a href="#">Partial</a>	No	\$163 - \$552	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
NE	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$70 - \$440	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
NV	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$16 - \$469	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
NH	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$32 - \$427	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
NJ	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$120 - \$713+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
NM	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$86 - \$461+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
NY	<a href="#">Partial</a>	No	\$104 - \$504	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
NC	<a href="#">Partial</a>	No	\$15 - \$350	No	N/A	N/A
ND	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$43 - \$618	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
OH	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$134 - \$480+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A



State	Unemployment Insurance				Paid Leave	
	Work Search Reqs. Suspended	Eligibility if Schools & Child Care Unavailable	Standard Weekly Benefit Amount	At Least 26 Weeks of Assistance	Family & Medical Leave Program	Sick Leave
OK	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$16 - \$539	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
OR	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$151 - \$648	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a> <sup>#</sup>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
PA	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$68 - \$572+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
PR	No	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$60 - \$240	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
RI	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$53 - \$599+	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
SC	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$42 - \$326	No	N/A	N/A
SD	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$28 - \$428	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
TN	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$30 - \$275	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
TX	No	No	\$69 - \$521	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
USVI	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$33 - \$602	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
UT	No	No	Maximum \$580	Yes	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A
VT	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	Maximum \$513	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Yes</a>
VA	<a href="#">Yes</a>	No	\$60 - \$378	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
WA	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$201 - \$844	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>
WV	<a href="#">Yes</a>	<a href="#">Yes</a>	\$24 - \$424	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
WI	No	No	\$54 - \$370	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A
WY	No	No	\$36 - \$508	<a href="#">Yes</a>	N/A	N/A

+ States provide additional unemployment supplements for individuals with dependents.

\* Duration of unemployment assistance is subject to unemployment rate.

# State paid leave programs have not taken effect as of January 2021.

**Source:** Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2021.

**Note:** Information as of 25 January 2021. Information based on data from and Authors' conversations with State Departments of Labor and State Departments of Education, full workbook and information available at <https://www.georgetownpoverty.org/issues/state-by-state-implications-of-unmet-child-care-needs/>.

**Figure 2. Income Eligibility Limits for Child Care Assistance for a Family of Three, & Waiting Lists by State, 2019**

State	As annual dollar amount	As percent of 2019 federal poverty level (\$21,330 a year)	As percent of 2019 state median income	Number of Children or Families on Waitlist List as of early 2019
AL	\$27,012	127%	46%	No waiting list
AK	\$61,872	290%	74%	No waiting list
AZ	\$34,296	161%	57%	2,420 children
AR	\$43,803	205%	83%	370 children
CA	\$54,027	253%	77%	Waiting lists at local level
CO	\$38,443	180%	50%	376 children
CT	\$47,270	222%	50%	No waiting list
DE	\$38,448	180%	50%	No waiting list
DC	\$51,050	239%	61%	No waiting list
FL	\$31,170	146%	53%	16,945 children
GA	\$30,745	144%	50%	Frozen intake
HI	\$47,124	221%	60%	No waiting list
ID	\$27,024	127%	49%	No waiting list
IL	\$38,448	180%	51%	No waiting list
IN	\$26,388	124%	41%	6,290 children
IA	\$30,132	141%	43%	No waiting list
KS	\$38,448	180%	57%	No waiting list
KY	\$33,252	156%	55%	No waiting list
LA	\$34,608	162%	55%	3,596 children
ME	\$58,000	272%	85%	No waiting list
MD	\$60,081	282%	64%	No waiting list
MA	\$47,802	224%	50%	18,829 children
MI	\$26,556	125%	39%	No waiting list
MN	\$39,455	185%	47%	1,640 families
MS	\$43,685	205%	85%	No waiting list
MO	\$27,816	130%	43%	No waiting list
MT	\$31,176	146%	48%	No waiting list
NE	\$27,012	127%	39%	No waiting list
NV	\$27,012	127%	45%	No waiting list
NH	\$45,716	214%	52%	No waiting list
NJ	\$41,560	195%	44%	No waiting list
NM	\$41,560	195%	80%	No waiting list
NY	\$41,560	195%	54%	Waiting lists at local level
NC	\$40,836	191%	67%	29,201 children
ND	\$46,572	218%	60%	No waiting list
OH	\$27,014	127%	39%	No waiting list
OK	\$35,100	165%	61%	No waiting list
OR	\$38,496	180%	58%	No waiting list
PA	\$41,560	195%	56%	3,886 children

State	As annual dollar amount	As percent of 2019 federal poverty level (\$21,330 a year)	As percent of 2019 state median income	Number of Children or Families on Waitlist List as of early 2019
RI	\$37,404	175%	46%	No waiting list
SC	\$32,450	152%	55%	No waiting list
SD	\$37,888	178%	56%	No waiting list
TN	\$49,740	233%	85%	No waiting list
TX	\$39,456-\$53,472	185%-251%	63%-85%	16,379 children
UT	\$37,416	175%	58%	No waiting list
VT	\$62,340	292%	85%	No waiting list
VA	\$31,176-\$51,960	146%-244%	38%-64%	7,053 children
WA	\$41,568	195%	54%	No waiting list
WV	\$31,176	146%	53%	No waiting list
WI	\$39,461	185%	53%	No waiting list
WY	\$38,760	182%	55%	No waiting list

**Source:** Schulman, Karen. “Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019.” National Women’s Law Center. October 2019. Available at <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>.

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