CENTER ON POVERTY and INEQUALITY
GEORGETOWN LAW

BRIEF

Robbed of Choice: The State of Work Among Women with Young Children

JAMIE JELLY MURTHA

The labor force participation rate of women with young children reached a record-breaking high of 70.6 percent in the fall of 2023.[1] The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021's increased funding for child care and the proliferation of remote work options during the pandemic were integral to these gains for women with infants and toddlers.[2] But as these caregiving lifelines disappeared beginning in late 2023, some women with young children were squeezed out of the workforce,[3] with Black mothers experiencing disproportionate impacts.[4, 5] Although the rate at which all mothers of young children work or search for work has improved somewhat, inequities within this group have persisted throughout the recovery.[6] As of April 2026, Black mothers are the only group among women with young children by race and ethnicity to be participating in the workforce at a rate lower than they were before the onset of the pandemic.[7]

In April 2026, President Donald Trump clarified the administration's position on federal funding for child care: "The United States can't take care of day care…it is not possible for us."[8] Although the U.S. has the highest GDP among OECD countries,[9] it ranks 17th by expenditures per child on early childhood education.[10] It trails far behind the OECD and EU averages.[11] This is not by chance: it is the result of decades of policy decisions that have framed child care as a threat to traditional values and a matter of personal responsibility.[12] Rather than building robust child care infrastructure with intentionality to benefit families, their economic security, and the national economy, the U.S. maintains a patchwork of programs that serve a minuscule fraction of the families who are legally eligible to receive it.[13, 14] Among the results are child care deserts, prices that have outpaced inflation and eclipsed rent, mortgage, and college tuition payments, and a lack of choice for mothers trying to support their families.[15]

Mothers who opt out of work to care for their children should do so by choice, not be forced to do so under structural constraints that promote financial insecurity and inequity. Women with children already experience a "child penalty" to employment and earnings over their lifetimes; it represents the single greatest driver of gender inequality in industrialized nations.[16] If a dearth of affordable child care options—a byproduct of what the U.S. Treasury has deemed a "market failure"[17]—increases or lengthens employment gaps for mothers who need to support their families, these women will face additional hurdles securing their next job and wages equivalent to those they last received.[18]

Mothers know firsthand what researchers have found repeatedly in rigorous studies: the ability to access affordable care increases the labor force participation and employment rates of mothers with young children,[19, 20] especially single mothers and those with low incomes.[21, 22] In a world of policy gambles, this is not a hopeful hypothesis or a spending risk: it is settled science.

Women With Young Children Worked at Record-Breaking Levels When Care-Related Barriers Were Reduced

LARGE-SCALE FEDERAL CHILD CARE INVESTMENTS AND INCREASED WORK-FROM-HOME OPTIONS ENABLED MORE MOTHERS TO WORK

The gap in workforce participation between all prime-age women and those with young children shrank during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021.[23] All demographic groups experienced job losses and virtual learning squeezed mothers of all school-age children.[24] Amid a strong recovery for workers between this low and the end of 2023, the labor force participation rate among all prime-age women climbed to a then-all-time high.[25] Remarkably, this growth was driven primarily by women with children under five.[26] The rate at which mothers of young children were working or looking for work peaked in the fall of 2023, reaching its highest level in U.S. history.[27]

The tight labor market and resulting wage growth following the COVID-19 recession had drawn many women with young children into the workforce.[28] During the "Great Resignation" of this period,[29] quit rates surged across the broader labor market to unprecedented levels as workers left the labor force, retired early, or leveraged high employer demand to secure better pay, working conditions, and flexibility in a "Great Reshuffling."[30] This record-breaking competition for workers placed significant upward pressure on wages and incentivized many mothers of young children to enter the workforce.[31] But two lifelines facilitated this entrance by directly reducing care-related barriers between 2021 and 2023:[32]

- **The federal government made its largest investment in child care in U.S. history under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021**.[33, 34] ARPA created two temporary grant programs that distributed about $39 billion of child care funding to states.[35] Governors were also permitted to spend part of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds they received under ARPA on child care.[36] States had broad flexibility to spend both of these investments as they saw fit, including on grant programs for care providers, child care subsidy expansions for families, and other initiatives.[37]
- **The proliferation of flexible, hybrid, and remote work arrangements created vital structural support for many mothers in the workforce**.[38] This transformation enabled women to better balance motherhood and employment, to the extent that these opportunities were offered in their industries and occupations.[39]

More than 225,000 child care providers received ARPA stabilization funding and more than 10 million children were impacted by the grants.[40] When surveyed, between one-quarter and one-third of child care providers reported that they would have been forced to close without the ARPA stabilization funds between 2021 and 2023.[41] The investments helped providers—who operate on razor-thin margins even outside of a global pandemic[42]—pay staff, moderate rising care costs, cover expenses, and enroll more children.[43]

Firsthand accounts from child care providers who received ARPA grant funding depict the law's grant programs as temporary life rafts.[44] The ARPA stabilization grant "went a long way" for Sally, the owner and operator of a day care in Waldorf, Maryland.[45] She used a portion of the funds to purchase a refrigerator for the children's food and to buy new toys that promoted STEM learning.[46] "Most importantly [I] provided free child care for families who could not afford child care—families that were in need of quality care" she says.[47] It also enabled her to offer tuition discounts to families who were paying out of pocket as they transitioned back to work.[48]

All told, ARPA grants reduced the cost of child care by about 10 percent according to the White House Council of Economic Advisors (CEA).[49] They also estimated that the grants increased the share of prime-age women with children under six who were working or looking for work by about 3 percentage points by October 2022, 18 months into the ARPA child care stabilization grant period.[50] Applying this growth to monthly workforce data from that period, **GCPI estimates that the ARPA funds caused more than 400,000 prime-age women with children under six to enter or remain in the workforce by October 2022**.[i] To put the scale of this percentage-point growth in perspective, it represents nearly half of the history-making gains in women's labor force participation between 1970 and 1979.[51] In the decade immediately preceding the pandemic, the rate at which all women were working or looking for work actually shrank by more than a percentage point.[52]

GCPI estimates that the ARPA funds caused more than 400,000 prime-age women with children under six to enter or remain in the workforce by October 2022.

The explosion of work-from-home and hybrid job opportunities also made work possible for women who had previously been unable to juggle a job and motherhood. In geographic areas and career paths where remote work is common, women with young children participate in the labor force at higher rates.[53] It is easy to see why: in prior analyses, women who worked full-time from home were able to spend, on average, about 2.4 more hours with their children each day than those who worked full-time outside of their home.[54]

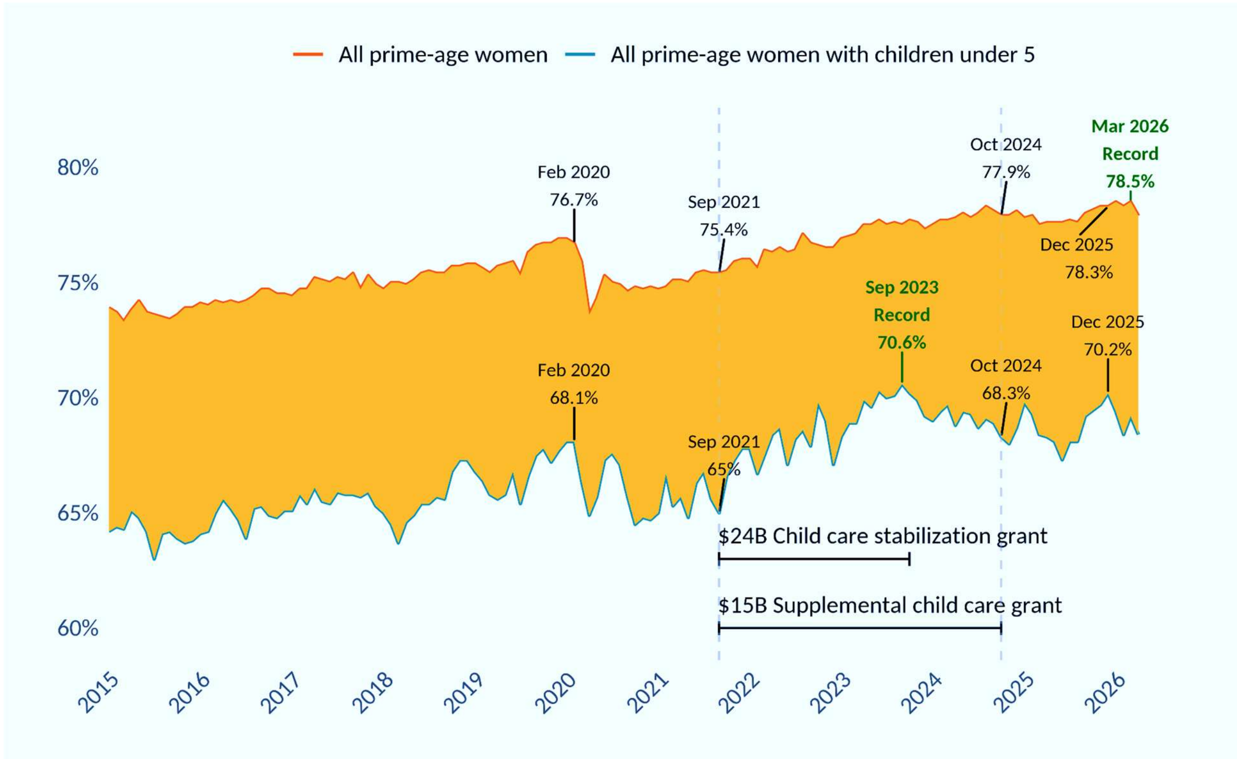
Profiles of working women paint this period as an era of increased economic opportunity and stability for mothers who were able to work remotely.[55] Julia, a mother of a six-month-old and an 11-year-old, took a job in 2021 because the company allowed flexible and remote work schedules due to the pandemic.[56] In prior jobs, she felt relegated to managing the balance between caregiving and work on her own and feared she would have to quit working if she couldn't juggle it all.[57] In her new role, she saved 90 minutes from her daily commute.[58] She used the time savings to feed her children after school, care for her infant, and bring her older child to after-school activities.[59]

---

[i] Holding all other factors in the CEA's analysis constant. Author's calculations, Bureau of Labor Statistics and IPUMS CPS microdata. Estimate is derived by applying a three-percentage point impact coefficient (per CEA, 2023) to the population of women ages 25 to 54 with at least one own child under six in October 2022. Counts are weighted using person-level weights (WTFINL). This estimate represents the causal effect of the ARPA stabilization grants, to the extent that the CEA's model estimates the unbiased effect of the ARPA funds on the labor force participation of prime-age women with children under six.

FIGURE 1. Labor Force Participation of Prime-Age Women with Young Children Drove Record Labor Force Participation Rate of All Prime-Age Women

The labor force participation rate of women with young children declined after the bulk of child care investments under the American Rescue Plan Act expired in late 2023.



Note: Data reflect seasonally adjusted monthly estimates of the labor force participation rate of women ages 25 to 54.

Source: Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2026. Adapted from The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution. Data from Bureau of Labor Statistics; IPUMS Current Population Survey, January 2015–April 2026.

Yet the gains in workforce participation among mothers of young children between the initial COVID-19 crisis and the end of 2023 were constrained by pre-existing inequities. The positive effects of the new structural supports to caregiving varied by race, education, and occupation.

By the time the ARPA stabilization grant concluded in the fall of 2023, the rate at which mothers of young children were working or looking for work had risen above its February 2020 level for white, Black, and Latina mothers.[60] The labor force participation rate among white mothers remained relatively stable during the early COVID-19 recession and made outright gains by 2023.[61] Although Latina mothers of children under five experienced the most severe drops in workforce participation amid the recession, the rate at which they were working or looking for work experienced a full recovery and, to a lesser extent than for white mothers, growth over pre-pandemic levels.[62] By contrast, Black mothers of young children, who have historically worked or searched for work at the highest levels among their peers, recovered and experienced the least growth (less than a percentage point, compared to more than 2.5 percentage points for white mothers of young children).[63]

Evidence suggests that the ARPA child care investments may have played a more pivotal role in the economic resilience of Black and Latina mothers of young children than it did for their white peers. Due to systemic workforce inequalities that existed prior to the pandemic, Black and Latina workers disproportionately held essential and front-line jobs.[64] Likewise, they were far less likely to have telework options.[65] These factors help explain why, in 2020, outsized shares of Black and Latina mothers reported working less or leaving the workforce entirely due to child care and K-12 schooling disruptions.[66] Further research suggests that COVID-19 child care shocks disproportionately impacted these women, exacerbating racial and economic inequities.[67] When care providers and schools closed, Black and Latina mothers lacked a "telework cushion" available to others and faced a more direct conflict between caregiving and employment.[68] By stabilizing the child care industry, the ARPA funds likely played a critical role in supporting the return of Black and Latina mothers with young children to the workforce.

Mothers of young children who were married or had at least a bachelor's degree experienced greater workforce gains than single mothers and those with lower educational attainment.[69] Employers did not offer flexible work arrangements at the same rates across roles, industries, or even states.[70] Even amid increased child care funding and more flexible work policies, the cost of care remained unaffordable for many families.[71] In the average month in 2023, the share of women with children under five who worked part-time in the prior week due to child care issues reached its highest level in more than two decades.[72]

Firsthand interviews with mothers across the country found that "America's child care crisis is holding back moms without college degrees."[73] Nicole, a mother in Washington without a diploma, had muddled through a string of lower-paying jobs in Washington before finally securing a job with a more livable wage in her state's child services department.[74] By 2023, she was married, expecting, and looking forward to returning to work after giving birth to her son.[75] But even with a dual-earner income, she struggled to find affordable child care options.[76] Her only options for child care were seats with long waitlists that would have cost most of her salary.[77] Nicole and her husband earned too much to qualify for child care subsidies.[78] Feeling "like she had no choice," she quit her job to care for her children full-time.[79] She still questions how it was possible to become economically cornered into quitting a good job.[80]

ENDING PANDEMIC-ERA CAREGIVING LIFELINES MEANT SOME WOMEN WERE SQUEEZED OUT OF WORK

When the ARPA grants ended in late 2023 and 2024, child care providers struggled to maintain prior levels of staffing.[81] Many increased tuition or closed.[82] Sandra, a care director who has worked in the industry for more than 25 years, was filled with anxiety as grant payments to her New York-based center dissipated.[83] She had used her center's ARPA funds to retain and recruit staff.[84] Even with the grant money, her staff's wages remained low "to keep [the] program sustainable."[85] She and her team did not know how they would generate the funds required to keep the center's doors open long term without further grant payments.[86] She planned to raise tuition slightly, but could not increase it to the level necessary to cover the center's costs without further straining families who were "already struggling with inflation and the cost of living".[87]

After the ARPA grants ended, the rate at which women with young children were working or looking for work decreased by about the amount it had increased while the ARPA grants were active, after controlling for other factors.[88] Return-to-office mandates also pressed women with infants and toddlers to leave work.[89]

By late 2023, the gap between the share of prime-age women who were working or looking for work and the share of women with young children who were working or looking for work began widening again.[90] The decline in these women's work was significant because it occurred outside of a recession and was marked by outright departures from the workforce, rather than unemployment.[91]

Kalisha is a mother of an infant who receives center-based care near her home in Idaho.[92] When the center lost its ARPA funding, it had to raise prices to keep up with costs.[93] Her bill rose to $400 a week, just as other pandemic-era programs that had paused student loan repayments and alleviated other financial burdens also ended.[94]

In the average month in 2025, nearly 160,000 more prime-age women with children under five were forgoing work to provide child care than in 2023.[95] While just over a quarter of the women who left the workforce between 2023 and 2025 to care for their children were white and about the same share were Latina, more than one-third were Black.[96] The change from 2023 to 2025 marked a 21 percent increase in the number of Black women who were forgoing work to care for their young children, compared to a 3 to 5 percent increase in the same measure for white and Latina women, respectively.[97]

FACING MULTIPLE BURDENS, WOMEN WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS ARE TRYING TO JUGGLE IT ALL

Toward the end of 2025, the seasonally adjusted rate at which women with young children were working or looking for work began climbing again and nearly matched its 2023 record.[98] It has declined since December,[99] and as of April 2026 sits just above the February 2020 rate.[100] With too few months of data, it is difficult to determine if this reflects a trend or monthly volatility. The smoother 12-month moving average of the labor force participation rate reveals a turning point in the second half of 2025, as the rate stopped declining and began a slight recovery.[101]

While high child care costs can force women whose potential wages would be eclipsed by care costs out of the workforce, the rate at which women with young children are working or looking for work has stabilized,[102] despite a broader cooling of the labor market.[103] This suggests that high care prices also act as a coercive driver of mothers' work in families struggling to balance their budgets amid the broader affordability crisis. The field would benefit from future analysis that differentiates the characteristics of mothers being pushed into—versus out of—the labor force by untenable child care prices.

An overwhelming majority of parents believe that raising children is unaffordable.[104] Families are finding that a second earner can make or break their ability to stay out of poverty.[105] With no second earner to spare, single mothers experience the financial strain of child care even more severely. The mounting affordability crisis compounds an already tenuous crisis of child care supply and tuition.[106] The increase in the cost of child care has outpaced inflation over the last five years and has surpassed other expenses that once ranked highest in families' budgets, such as rent and mortgage payments.[107] Chelsea, a 35-year old teacher in Oklahoma, says she would work less to care for her four-year-old daughter if it were possible: "I feel like that's not a luxury we have these days in America."[108]

BLACK MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN FACE A UNIQUELY CHALLENGING BURDEN

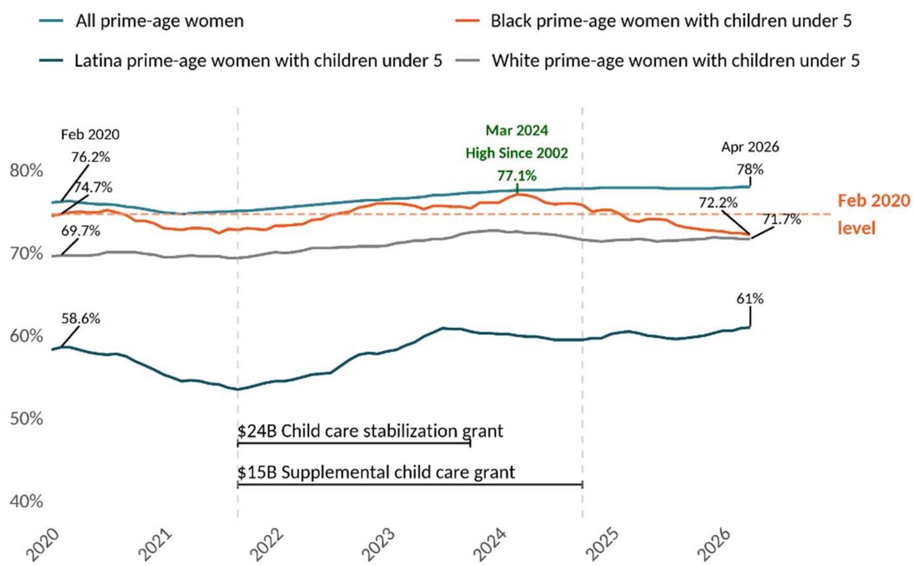
While most demographic groups have seen their employment prospects continue to improve since the pandemic, Black mothers of young children have faced a unique reversal. Although workforce participation has continued to stabilize for white and Latina women with young children since 2023,[109] the rate for Black mothers in this demographic has continued to trend downward since early 2024, falling by nearly 5 percentage points.[110] While the rates of workforce participation among other Black women also experienced declines, the trend was most acute among those with infants and toddlers.[111]

Starkly, Black women with young children are the only group currently participating in the workforce at a rate lower than they were in February 2020,[112] compared to prime-age women overall, those with children under five, and white and Latina mothers of young children. Based on a 12-month moving average, there is a gap of nearly 37,000 Black mothers of young children in the workforce as of April 2026, compared to what would be expected at February 2020 participation rates.[113] This represents a more than 3.5 percent loss of the potential labor force for Black women: a staggering departure compared to the gains made by their peers.[114] By contrast, Latina mothers of young children saw a more than 3.5 percent gain (nearly 57,000 mothers), and white mothers of young children saw a more than 2.5 percent gain (over 108,000 mothers) in workforce participation beyond what economists would have expected at February 2020 rates.[115]

This disproportionate change likely resulted from several reinforcing factors. Black women bore many more job losses during the 2025 federal layoffs, buyouts, and discontinuations of DEI policies in federal employment than other women and Black men.[116] As care-related barriers went back up, Black women may also have felt the squeeze more severely than other women. Although white and Black children receive care from non-relatives, such as a child care provider, at similar rates,[117] Black women are much more likely to have lower incomes than white women,[118] and Black and Latino families are significantly more likely to be impacted by tuition increases than white families.[119] While Latina women are also more likely than white women to have lower incomes, Latino children are much more likely to receive care from relatives.[120]

FIGURE 2. The Child Care "Funding Cliff" and Federal Job Losses Eroded Post-Pandemic Recovery in the Labor Force Participation Rate of Black Prime-Age Mothers of Infants and Toddlers

Compared to prime-age women overall, those with children under five, and white or Latina women with children under five, Black women with young children are the only group currently participating in the labor force at a rate lower than they were in February 2020.



Note: Data reflect 12-month moving averages of the labor force participation rate of women ages 25 to 54. 'Black' refers to Black, non-Hispanic women. 'White' refers to white, non-Hispanic women. 'Latina' refers to Hispanic, Latina, or Spanish women.

Source: Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2026. Adapted from The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution. Data from Bureau of Labor Statistics; IPUMS Current Population Survey, January 2015–April 2026

Investments in U.S. Child Care Infrastructure Would Enable More Women to Raise a Family

The current administration has made it clear through a variety of pro-natalist policies that it is eager for women to have more children,[121] but its policies make it harder for women to do so. Unlike other leading industrialized nations, the U.S. lacks a cohesive and comprehensive strategy toward treating child care infrastructure as a public good.[122] The patchwork of effective programs that the federal government and states maintain is under-resourced, understaffed, and underfunded.[123] The latest data show that only 15 percent of children eligible for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies under federal guidelines actually receive support through the program.[124] This particularly stings because the CCDF is the closest approach the U.S. has implemented to child care "infrastructure" alongside Head Start.[125]

Again and again, high-quality research has shown that when women are more able to afford child care, they are more likely to work, seek work, and be employed.[126, 127] This likelihood is highest among women with young children.[128] It is especially true for women with low incomes and single mothers.[129, 130]

- **High child care costs push mothers out of the workforce.**[131] Research has repeatedly found that higher child care costs reduce the rate at which mothers of young children work or seek employment.[132] Most recently, evidence suggests that mothers with low incomes experienced the largest negative impacts to labor force participation when costs grew.[133]
- **Likewise, when care becomes more affordable—or universal—a substantially higher share of women with young children is able to work.[134]** Syntheses of the literature indicate that a 10 percent reduction in the price of child care leads, on average, to a 0.5 to 2.5 percentage point increase in labor force participation.[135] While estimates across studies vary by context, the effect of making care more affordable is overwhelmingly positive.[136] State-level implementations of universal or heavily subsidized pre-K programs have also been found to increase the workforce participation and employment of women with young children.[137] Kindergarten enrollment, which serves as a proxy for free child care, is also associated with an increase in mothers' labor force participation.[138]
- **CCDF subsidies are proven to enable mothers with low incomes to earn a living.**[139] A joint report by federal agencies found that higher state expenditures on CCDF subsidies directly increased the employment rates of potentially eligible mothers, particularly those with children under the age of 3.[140] A simulation analysis predicted that expanding eligibility for child care subsidies would cause hundreds of thousands of mothers to either enter the workforce or increase the total number of hours they worked, yielding broader economic returns.[141]

To support the financial security of U.S. women and their families, the federal government should meaningfully invest in child care infrastructure as an economic policy. But it should also discontinue its pursuit of harmful policies that decrease supply and drive prices up. The administration should halt its efforts to freeze CCDF funding in five states;[142] the impact would be devastating to the families relying on child care subsidies.[143] The federal government should also end its reversal of significant recent CCDF policy improvements under the guise of increasing operational flexibility for states.[144, 145] These policies will increase care costs for families with low incomes,[146] reduce the availability of care providers for these families,[147] and further raise operating costs for providers themselves. Alongside rejecting policies that reduce affordable child care, lawmakers should treat public benefits programs as pillars of an inclusive economy by rolling back the restrictive healthcare and food assistance cuts outlined in H.R. 1. These policy redirections would directly mitigate the lifelong "child penalty" through which gender inequality persists.[148]

Conclusion

Women should be able to take care of their children full-time or part-time by choice—not be forced to do so under caregiving constraints that promote economic instability and inequity. But current federal policies make it harder for women with young children to work. Amid a child care crisis set to worsen[149]—and a broader rise in the unaffordability of American life[150]—women with young children are running out of options. Decades of research overwhelmingly finds that when these women gain access to child care they can afford, they are better able to earn income and make substantial workforce participation and employment gains.[151] Policymakers should treat child care, food security, and accessible healthcare as fundamental priorities to ensure that all families have the opportunity to prosper.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Liz Hipple for her extensive guidance and feedback on the framing and content of this piece as well as her careful review and substantive feedback. A special thank you to Kate Bahn and Ariane Hegewich of the Institute for Women's Policy Research for their review and helpful and thoughtful feedback. And additional thanks to Adam Wilson for his editing, and Jingwen Xiao and Bennett Flanagan for their careful fact checking. Any errors of fact or interpretation remain the author's.

Endnotes

[1] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to seasonally-adjusted estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[2] "Did Stabilization Funds Help Mothers Get Back to Work After the COVID-19 Recession?" White House Council of Economic Advisors, 7 November 2023. Available at https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Care-Stabilization.pdf https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Care-Stabilization.pdf.

[3] Ibid.; Bhattarai, Abha. "Mothers are leaving the workforce, erasing pandemic gains." *Washington Post*, 11 August 2025. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/11/mothers-leaving-workforce-large-numbers/; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[4] Author's calculations, Bureau of Labor Statistics and IPUMS CPS microdata. Based on disparities in the share of women ages 25 to 54 with at least one child under the age of five who are not in the labor force due to "taking care of house or family" (IPUMS CPS variable NILFACT) by race and ethnicity. Counts are derived by applying person-level weights (WTFINL) to microdata and represent the change in pooled averages of monthly estimates.

[5] "Early Childhood Program Participation: 2023." National Household Education Surveys Program, National Center for Education Statistics, 2023. Available at https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2024/2024112.pdf'; FY 2023 Preliminary Data Table 12 - Average Monthly Percentages of Children by Latino Ethnicity." Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2023. Available at https://acf.gov/occ/data/fy-2023-preliminary-data-table-12; "Going Over the Child Care Cliff." National Association for the Education of Young Children, November 2022. Available at https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/nov_survey_brief.pdf.

[6] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to 12-month moving average estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[7] Based on percentage point change in 12-month moving average estimates of the labor force participation rate between February 2020 and April 2026, by race and ethnicity. Estimates obtained by filtering data by "Female;" including "Race and Ethnicity" and "Age of Youngest Child" parameters; and filtering "Age of Youngest Child" to "Under 5." "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[8] Arnsdorf, Isaac. "Trump's reversal on day care upends a bipartisan push to lower costs." *Washington Post*, 15 April 2026. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/04/15/trump-childcare-abandoned-pledge/.

[9] "GDP (Current US$) - OECD Members." World Bank Data. Available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=OE&most_recent_value_desc=true.

[10] "Education at a Glance 2025: OECD Indicators." OECD, 2025. Available at https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/09/education-at-a-glance-2025_c58fc9ae/1c0d9c79-en.pdf.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Bigelow, Lelaine. "The Story We Inherited About Work and Family." Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, 26 March 2026. Available at https://www.georgetownpoverty.org/issues/the-story-we-inherited-about-work-and-family/.

[13] "The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States." Department of the Treasury, September 2021. Available at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf; "2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue." Government Accountability Office, February 2012. Available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/d12342SP.pdf.

[14] "Child Care: Subsidy Eligibility and Use and State Waiver Requests Related to New Program Requirements." GAO Report 25-107754." Government Accountability Office, 30 January 2025. Available at https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107754.

[15] Elkeurti, Asmaa and Claire Cain Miller. "Why Does Child Care Seem Less Affordable Than Ever? " *New York Times*, 5 March 2026. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/05/upshot/child-care-expensive-prices.html.

[16] Kleven,Henrik, Camille Landais, and Gabriel Leite-Mariante. "The Child Penalty Atlas." The Review of Economic Studies, 1 October 2025. Available at https://collaborate.princeton.edu/en/publications/the-child-penalty-atlas/.

[17] "The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States." Department of the Treasury, September 2021. Available at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf.

[18] Correll, Shelley J., Stephen Benard, and Ian Paik. "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" Gender Action Portal, Harvard Kennedy School, March 2007. Available at https://gap.hks.harvard.edu/getting-job-there-motherhood-penalty; Shenhav, Na'ama. "How Much Do Work Interruptions Reduce Mothers' Wages?" Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 2 October 2023. Available at https://www.frbsf.org/research-and-insights/publications/economic-letter/2023/10/how-much-do-work-interruptions-reduce-mothers-wages/.

[19] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; Enchautegui, María E., et al. "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the

Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child care and parent labor force participation: a review of the research literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.

[20] Enchautegui, María E., et al. "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Tekin, Erdal. "Child Care Subsidy Receipt, Employment, and Child Care Choices of Single Mothers." National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2004. Available at https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w10459/w10459.pdf.

[21] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; Enchautegui, María E., et al. "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf;

[22] Cascio, Elizabeth U. "Maternal Labor Supply and the Introduction of Kindergartens into American Public Schools." *Journal of Human Resources*, 44 (1): 140-170, January 2009. Available at https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.44.1.140; Tekin, Erdal. "Child Care Subsidy Receipt, Employment, and Child Care Choices of Single Mothers." National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2004. Available at https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w10459/w10459.pdf.

[23] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to seasonally adjusted estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[24] Dunn, Megan. "Demographic Changes in Employment during the COVID-19 Pandemic." Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 2022. Available at https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/demographic-changes-in-employment-during-the-pandemic/home.htm.

[25] Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/; "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to seasonally adjusted estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[26] Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/.

[27] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to seasonally adjusted estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[28] Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[29] Gittleman, Maury. "The Great Resignation in Perspective." Monthly Labor Review, Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 2022. Available at https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2022/article/the-great-resignation-in-perspective.htm.

[30] Janicki, Hubert. "From Great Resignation to Great Reshuffling: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Prompted More People to Change Jobs." U.S. Census Bureau, 13 May 2024. Available at https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/05/great-reshuffling.html.

[31] Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[32] "ARP Child Care Stabilization Funding Fact Sheet." Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, June 2022. Available at https://acf.gov/archive/occ/map/arp-act-stabilization-funding-state-territory-fact-sheets; Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/; "Did Stabilization Funds Help Mothers Get Back to Work After the COVID-19 Recession?" White House Council of Economic Advisors, 7 November 2023. Available at https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Care-Stabilization.pdf.

[33] Girouard, Diane. "Reflecting on the Impact of the American Rescue Plan Act." Child Care Aware of America, 11 March 2022. Available at https://info.childcareaware.org/blog/reflectinontheimpactoftheamericanrescueplanact.

[34] "INFORMATION MEMORANDUM ARP ACT CCDF DISCRETIONARY SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS." Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 11 June 2021. Available at https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/occ/CCDF-ACF-IM-2021-03.pdf.

[35] Ibid.

[36] "Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds." U.S. Department of the Treasury, 25 April 2026. Available at https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds; Abbott, Sam and Shira Markoff. "A review of the state of child care in the United States." Equitable Growth,

9 April 2026. Available at https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/a-review-of-the-state-of-child-care-in-the-united-states/.

[37] Abbott, Sam. "Policymakers can still use American Rescue Plan funds to bolster the U.S. child care system and ensure it has a strong future." Equitable Growth, 20 September 2022. Available at https://equitablegrowth.org/policymakers-can-still-use-american-rescue-plan-funds-to-bolster-the-u-s-child-care-system-and-ensure-it-has-a-strong-future/.

[38] Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/; George, Erin. "Mothers' employment has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, but the child care crisis persists." Department of Labor, 6 May 2024. Available at https://blog.dol.gov/2024/05/06/mothers-employment-has-surpassed-pre-pandemic-levels-but-the-child-care-crisis-persists; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[39] Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/; George, Erin. "Mothers' employment has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, but the child care crisis persists." Department of Labor, 6 May 2024. Available athttps://blog.dol.gov/2024/05/06/mothers-employment-has-surpassed-pre-pandemic-levels-but-the-child-care-crisis-persists; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[40] "American Rescue Plan Child Care Stabilization Program." Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, September 2023. Available at https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/occ/National_ARP_Child_Care_Stabilization_Program_Fact_Sheet_Sept_2023.pdf.

[41] "CHILD CARE PROVIDERS WORRY ABOUT ARPA FUNDS ENDING." RAPID Survey Project and Stanford Center for Early Education, August 2023. Available at https://rapidsurveyproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/arpa-funding-factsheet-aug2023.pdf; "Uncertainty Ahead Means Instability Now." National Association for the Education of Young Children, November 2022. Available at https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/user-73607/november_2022_naeyc_policy_fieldsurvey_final.pdf.

[42] "The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States." Department of the Treasury, September 2021. Available at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf.

[43] "ARP Child Care Stabilization Funding Fact Sheet." Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, June 2022. Available at https://acf.gov/archive/occ/map/arp-act-stabilization-funding-state-territory-fact-sheets; "Did Stabilization Funds Help Mothers Get Back to Work After the COVID-19 Recession?" White House Council of Economic Advisors, 7 November 2023. Available at https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Care-Stabilization.pdf.

[44] Gomez, Kristina. "Understanding the Landscape of Stabilization Grant Funding." Child Care Aware of America, 30 June 2022. Available at https://info.childcareaware.org/blog/understanding-the-landscape-of-stabilization-grant-funding.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] "Did Stabilization Funds Help Mothers Get Back to Work After the COVID-19 Recession?" White House Council of Economic Advisors, 7 November 2023. Available at https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Care-Stabilization.pdf.

[50] "Did Stabilization Funds Help Mothers Get Back to Work After the COVID-19 Recession?" White House Council of Economic Advisors, 7 November 2023. Available at https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Care-Stabilization.pdf.

[51] Based on a comparison of percentage point change in the labor force participation rate. "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook." Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 2021. Available at https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2020/home.htm.

[52] Ibid.

[53] D'Angelis, Ilaria and Keren Horn. "Understanding the Congestion Child Penalty: Can Remote Work Attenuate It?" Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 12 February 2026. Available at https://equitablegrowth.org/working-papers/understanding-the-congestion-child-penalty-can-remote-work-attenuate-it/; Harrington, Emma and Matthew E. Kahn. "Has the Rise of Work from Home Reduced the Motherhood Penalty in the Labor Market?" National Bureau of Economic Research, August 2025. Available at https://www.nber.org/papers/w34147.

[54] Ruiz, Nicole W. and Grant Bailey. "More Time With Mom: How Remote Work Shapes Mothers' Time." Institute for Family Studies, 8 May 2025. Available at https://ifstudies.org/blog/more-time-with-mom-how-remote-work-shapes-mothers-time-.

[55] Miller, Claire C. "The 'Silver Lining to the Pandemic' for Working Mothers." New York Times, 28 October 2023. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/28/upshot/mothers-remote-work-pandemic.html.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to 12-month moving average estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[61] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to 12-month moving average estimates. Available at

https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[62] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to 12-month moving average estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[63] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to 12-month moving average estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[64] Brown, C., et al. "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Black and Hispanic Americans' Work Outcomes: a Scoping Review." *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, (11):1157 - 1172, 28 April 2023. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40615-023-01594-6.

[65] Gould, Elise and Heidi Shierholz. "Not everybody can work from home." Economic Policy Institute, 19 March 2020. Available at https://www.epi.org/blog/black-and-hispanic-workers-are-much-less-likely-to-be-able-to-work-from-home/.

[66] Lloro, Alicia. "Consumer and Community Context." Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 12 November 2021. Available at https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2021-november-consumer-community-context.htm.

[67] Lim, Katherine, and Mike Zabek. "Women's Labor Force Exits during COVID-19: Differences by Motherhood, Race, and Ethnicity." Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 23 September 2021. Available at https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/feds/files/2021067r1pap.pdf.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Bauer, Lauren, and Sarah Yu Wang. "Prime-age women are going above and beyond in the labor market recovery." Brookings Institution, 30 August 2023. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/prime-age-women-labor-market-recovery/

[70] "Business Response Survey Data Tables." Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022. Available at https://www.bls.gov/brs/data/tables/2022/home.htm. See Industry and State files for Result ID 2.1 and 2.2.

[71] "The Child Care at a Standstill: Price and Landscape Analysis." Child Care Aware of America, 2024. Available at https://www.childcareaware.org/thechildcarestandstill/.

[72] Author's calculations, Bureau of Labor Statistics and IPUMS CPS microdata. Estimate represents the share of women ages 25 to 54 with at least one child under five who worked part-time in the prior week who did so due to "child care problems" (IPUMS CPS variable WHYPTLWK). Counts are derived by applying person-level weights (WTFINL) to microdata and represent the change in pooled averages of monthly estimates.

[73] "America's child care crisis is holding back moms without college degrees." Associated Press, 23 April 2024. Available at https://apnews.com/article/daycare-child-care-college-degree-moms-ac72f1227844eae0281305835e07273b.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Kashen, Julie and Laura V. Gutierrez." Child Care Funding Cliff at One Year: Rising Prices, Shrinking Options, and Families Squeezed." Century Foundation, 24 September 2024. Available at https://tcf.org/content/report/child-care-funding-cliff-at-one-year/; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[82] Kashen, Julie and Laura V. Gutierrez." Child Care Funding Cliff at One Year: Rising Prices, Shrinking Options, and Families Squeezed." Century Foundation, 24 September 2024. Available at https://tcf.org/content/report/child-care-funding-cliff-at-one-year/.

[83] Girouard, Diane and Elise Cranston. "Understanding the Landscape of Stabilization Grant Funding Through Provider Stories." Child Care Aware of America, 3 May 2024. Available at https://info.childcareaware.org/blog/understanding-the-landscape-of-stabilization-grant-funding.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] "Did Stabilization Funds Help Mothers Get Back to Work After the COVID-19 Recession?" White House Council of Economic Advisors, 7 November 2023. Available at https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Care-Stabilization.pdf.

[89] Bhattarai, Abha. "Mothers are leaving the workforce, erasing pandemic gains." *Washington Post*, 11 August 2025. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/11/mothers-leaving-workforce-large-numbers/; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[90] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to seasonally adjusted estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[91] "Diverging Trends: Prime-Age Women's LFPR Continues to Rise, but Moms with Young Kids Are Feeling the Effects of the Child Care Funding Cliff." Joint Economic Committee Democrats, 17 December 2024. Available at https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/2024/12/g-trends-prime-age-women-s-lfpr-continues-to-rise-but-moms-with-young-kids-are-feeling-the-effects-of-the-child-care-funding-cliff; Nestler, Matthew. "The Great Exit." KPMG, 1 October 2025. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2025/october-2025-the-great-exit.html.

[92] Goldstein, Katherine. "Positive Economic Data Is Still Hiding Bleak Reality for Families." *Time*, 18 April 2024. Available at https://time.com/6967551/u-s-economy-childcare/.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Author's calculations, Bureau of Labor Statistics and IPUMS CPS microdata. Estimates represent the share of women ages 25 to 54 with at least one child under the age of five who are not in the labor force due to "taking care of house or family" (IPUMS CPS variable NILFACT). Counts are derived by applying person-level weights (WTFINL) to microdata and represent the change in pooled averages of monthly estimates.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to seasonally adjusted estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Tracking " the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Refers to 12-month moving average estimates. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[103] "Job Openings Rate." Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 12 May 2026. Available at https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/JTS000000000000000JOR.

[104] "American Family Survey." Brigham Young University and YouGov, 2025. Available at https://brightspotcdn.byu.edu/94/40/f8d1bacd4ccbaaaee123df0292e5/2025-topline.pdf.

[105] Ember, Sydney. Flexibility and Rising Costs Are Keeping Mothers at Work." *New York Times*, 12 February 2026. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/12/business/economy/mothers-labor-force-participation.html.

[106] McKernan, Signe-Mary, et al. "American Affordability Tracker." Urban Institute, 2 April 2026. Available at https://www.urban.org/data-tools/american-affordability-tracker.

[107] "Child Care in America: 2024 Price & Supply." Child Care Aware of America, 2024. Available at https://www.childcareaware.org/price-landscape24/.

[108] Yee, Vivian. "The Last Day at Kids of Faith: Parents Navigating a Child Care Crisis." *New York Times*, 13 April 2026. https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/13/us/childcare-daycare.html.

[109] Based on percentage point change in 12-month moving average estimates of the labor force participation rate between 2023 peaks by race and ethnicity and April 2026, by race and ethnicity. "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[110] Based on percentage point change in 12-month moving average estimates of the labor force participation rate between March 2024—the series high since 2002—and April 2026, by race and ethnicity and age of the youngest own child. "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Based on percentage point change in 12-month moving average estimates of the labor force participation rate between February 2020 and April 2026, by race and ethnicity. Compared to prime-age women overall, those with children under five, and white and Latina mothers of young children. "Tracking the Labor Market and Jobs." Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2026. Available at https://www.hamiltonproject.org/data/tracking-the-labor-market-and-jobs/.

[113] Author's calculations, Bureau of Labor Statistics and IPUMS CPS microdata. Counts are derived by applying person-level weights (WTFINL). Estimates for April 2026 reflect eleven months of data due to a lack of CPS data in October 2025.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Wilson, Valerie. "Black women suffered large employment losses in 2025—particularly among college graduates and public-sector workers." Economic Policy Institute, 10 February 2026. Available at https://www.epi.org/blog/black-women-suffered-large-employment-losses-in-2025-particularly-among-college-graduates-and-public-sector-workers/#:~:text=Large%20employment%20losses%20and%20labor,%2C%20civic%2C%20and%20professional%20organizations.

[117] "Early Childhood Program Participation: 2023." National Household Education Surveys Program, National Center for Education Statistics, 2023. Available at https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2024/2024112.pdf.

[118] "Median annual earnings by sex, race and Hispanic ethnicity." Women's Bureau, December 2025. Available at https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data/earnings/median-annual-sex-race-hispanic-ethnicity.

[119] "Going Over the Child Care Cliff." National Association for the Education of Young Children, November 2022. Available at https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/nov_survey_brief.pdf.

[120] "Early Childhood Program Participation: 2023." National Household Education Surveys Program, National Center for Education Statistics, 2023. Available at https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2024/2024112.pdf.

[121] "Project 2025 and Pronatalism: How Trump's Allies Are Pushing a Far-Right Family Agenda." National Women's Law Center, 19 August 2025. Available at https://nwlc.org/project-2025-and-pronatalism-how-trumps-allies-are-pushing-a-far-right-family-agenda/.

[122] "Education at a Glance 2025: OECD Indicators." OECD, 2025. Available at https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/09/education-at-a-glance-2025_c58fc9ae/1c0d9c79-en.pdf.

[123] Walsh, Brittany. "From Patchwork to Progress." Bipartisan Policy Center, 8 December 2025. Available at https://bipartisanpolicy.org/article/from-patchwork-to-progress-building-a-stable-child-care-system/#:~:text=Each%20fix%20has%20helped%20in,and%20even%20harder%20to%20sustain; "The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States." Department of the Treasury, September 2021. Available at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf.

[124] "Child Care: Subsidy Eligibility and Use and State Waiver Requests Related to New Program Requirements." GAO Report 25-107754." Government Accountability Office, 30 January 2025. Available at https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107754; Lynch, Karen E. "The Child Care and Development Block Grant: In Brief." Congressional Research Service, Report R47312. Available at https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47312; "The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States." Department of the Treasury, September 2021. Available at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf.

[125] Blau, David. "Child Care Subsidy Programs." Means-Tested Transfer Programs in the United States, National Bureau of Economic Research, pp. 443–516, 2003. Available at https://www.nber.org/system/files/chapters/c10260/c10260.pdf.

[126] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child care and parent labor force participation: a review of the research literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.

[127] "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Graf, Nikki L., Liana C. Landivar, and Giorleny A. Rayo. "Childcare Prices in Local Areas: Initial Findings from the National Database of Childcare Prices." U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, January 2023. Available at https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WB/NDCP/508_WB_IssueBrief-NDCP-20230213.pdf; Tekin, Erdal. "Child Care Subsidy Receipt, Employment, and Child Care Choices of Single Mothers." National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2004. Available at https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w10459/w10459.pdf.

[128] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child care and parent labor force participation: a review of the research literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.

[129] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force ." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf.

[130] Cascio, Elizabeth U. "Maternal Labor Supply and the Introduction of Kindergartens into American Public Schools." *Journal of Human Resources*, 44 (1): 140-170, January 2009. Available at https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.44.1.140; Tekin, Erdal. "Child Care Subsidy Receipt, Employment, and Child Care Choices of Single Mothers." National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2004. Available at https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w10459/w10459.pdf.

[131] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child care and parent labor force participation: a review of the research literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.

[132] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child care and parent labor force participation: a review of the research literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.

[133] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf.

[134] Cascio, Elizabeth U. "Maternal Labor Supply and the Introduction of Kindergartens into American Public Schools." *Journal of Human Resources*, 44 (1): 140-170, January 2009.

Available at https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.44.1.140; Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child care and parent labor force participation: a review of the research literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.

[135] Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child care and parent labor force participation: a review of the research literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ilin, Elias, Sebastian Shampine, and Samantha Terry. "Does Access to Free Pre-Kindergarten Increase Maternal Labor Supply?" Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, November 2021. Available at https://www.kansascityfed.org/documents/8503/rwp21-11ilinshampineterry.pdf; Jackson, C. Kirabo, Julia A. Turner, and Jacob Bastian. "Universal Pre-K as Economic Stimulus: Evidence from Nine States and Large Cities in the U.S." National Bureau of Economic Research, May 2025. Available at https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w33767/w33767.pdf.

[138] Fitzpatrick, Maria Donovan. "Revising Our Thinking About the Relationship Between Maternal Labor Supply and Preschool." *Journal of Human Resources*, 47(3): 583-612, July 2012. Available at https://jhr.uwpress.org/content/47/3/583; Gelbach, Jonah B. "Public Schooling for Young Children and Maternal Labor Supply." *American Economic Review*, 92(1): 307-322, March 2002. Available at https://www.jstor.org/stable/3083335.

[139] "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Tekin, Erdal. "Child Care Subsidy Receipt, Employment, and Child Care Choices of Single Mothers." National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2004. Available at https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w10459/w10459.pdf.

[140] "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf.

[141] Giannarelli, Linda, et al. "What If We Expanded Child Care Subsidies?" Urban Institute, June 2019. Available at https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/100284/what_if_we_expanded_child_care_subsidies_5.pdf.

[142] "HHS Freezes Child Care and Family Assistance Grants in Five States for Fraud Concerns." Department of Health and Human Services, 6 January 2026. Available at https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/hhs-freezes-child-care-family-assistance-grants-five-states-fraud-concerns.html.

[143] Bassok, Daphna, et al. "What Happens When Families Cannot Access Child Care Subsidies?" Brookings Institution, 20 January 2026. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-happens-when-families-cannot-access-child-care-subsidies/.

[144]Improving Child Care Access, Affordability, and Stability in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)." Federal Register, 1 March 2024. Available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/01/2024-04139/improving-child-care-access-affordability-and-stability-in-the-child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf.

[145] "Restoring Flexibility in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)." Federal Register, 12 May 2026. Available at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/12/2026-09382/restoring-flexibility-in-the-child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf.

[146] Ettinger de Cuba, Stephanie. "CHW Comments on CCDF." Children's HealthWatch, 4 February 2026. Available at https://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/CHW-Comments-CCDF.pdf.

[147] "Restoring Flexibility in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF): A Proposed Rule by the Department of Health and Human Services on 01/05/2026." Center for Law and Social Policy and National Women's Law Center, 4 February 2026. Available at https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/CLASP-and-NWLC-2026-CCDF-NPRM-Comment.pdf; "What Does the 2026 CCDF Final Rule Change?" National Association for the Education of Young Children, n.d. Available at https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/2026-ccdf-final-rule.

[148] Kleven,Henrik, Camille Landais, and Gabriel Leite-Mariante. "The Child Penalty Atlas." The Review of Economic Studies, 1 October 2025. Available at https://collaborate.princeton.edu/en/publications/the-child-penalty-atlas/.

[149] Nestler, Matthew. "Mapping the Care Economy in 2026." KPMG, 20 March 2026. Available at https://kpmg.com/us/en/articles/2026/march-2026-mapping-the-care-economy-in-2026.html.

[150] McKernan, Signe-Mary, et al. "American Affordability Tracker." Urban Institute, 2 April 2026. Available at https://www.urban.org/data-tools/american-affordability-tracker.

[151] Araujo, Valeska, Linden McBride & Danielle H. Sandler. "The Impact of Childcare Costs on Mothers' Labor Force Participation." U.S. Census Bureau, April 2025. Available at https://www2.census.gov/library/working-papers/2025/adrm/ces/CES-WP-25-25.pdf; "Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers." Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2016. Available at https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf; Graf, Nikki L., Liana C. Landivar, and Giorleny A. Rayo. "Childcare Prices in Local Areas: Initial Findings from the National Database of Childcare Prices." U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, January 2023. Available at https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WB/NDCP/508_WB_IssueBrief-NDCP-20230213.pdf; Morrissey, Taryn W. "Child Care and Parent Labor Force Participation: A Review of the Research Literature." Review of Economics of the Household, 23 March 2016. Available at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-016-9331-3.