



Child Care Provider Poll Results

		<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Have you experienced difficulty hiring staff in the past 6 months?	Yes	111	89%
	No	<u>14</u>	11%
		125	
2. Do you currently have staff vacancies?	Yes	103	81%
	No	<u>24</u>	19%
		127	
3. Are you under enrolled due to lack of necessary staff?	Yes	68	57%
	No	<u>52</u>	43%
		120	
4. If you are under enrolled due to staffing, do you have a wait list of children?	Yes	64	69%
	No	<u>29</u>	31%
		93	
5. Are you currently operating below break even?	Yes	71	62%
	No	<u>44</u>	38%
		115	

The poll was conducted on a zoom meeting 1/24/2022

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Staffing Shortage Threatens Child Care Industry

Connecticut's rapid deployment of \$118 million in ARPA funds has prevented the collapse of the child care industry during the pandemic, but staffing issues threaten the ongoing viability of the industry. A poll of child care providers conducted by the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance found:

- 62% of programs are operating at a loss
- Four out of five child care programs have staff vacancies.
- 57% of programs report that those staff shortages are forcing them to operate below their licensed capacity and more than 2/3rds of those programs have wait lists of children.

Low wages in the child care industry are a chronic problem rooted in the fact that most child care is paid for by parents. For many families, child care is already their highest or second highest monthly expense. The state's child care subsidy system, Care4Kids, serves a tiny fraction of families who struggle with child care costs and pays providers well below the market rate. Provider payment levels under the state's School Readiness preschool program and Child Development Centers have been stagnant since 2015 while the minimum wage has gone from \$9.15 to \$13 per hour.

All of this leaves the child care industry in an untenable position. The pandemic has reduced the size of the overall workforce. Employers competing for scarce workers have raised wages. This leaves child care providers who are less able to raise prices, unable to hire staff at the wages they can afford to pay. The resulting child care staff shortage is reducing child care capacity making it impossible for parents to return to the workforce.

"Child care has been ignored for too long and the current crisis demands action," said Merrill Gay, Executive Director of the CT Early Childhood Alliance. "There are three big problems in child care. There isn't enough of it to serve all the families that need care, it's too expensive and child care providers don't get paid enough to stay in business much less grow to meet the need. It is a broken market, and when markets are broken, the government needs to step in to make things work," he continued.