

ONE YEAR INTO A PANDEMIC

SPRING 2021

CHILD CARE IN MAINE



PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY

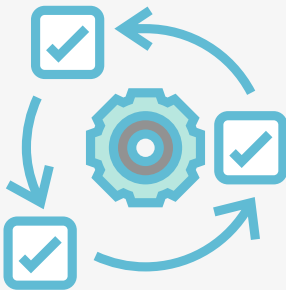
THE MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
THE FAMILY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF MAINE
THE YMCA ALLIANCE OF MAINE
MAINE HEAD START DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

TIMELINE



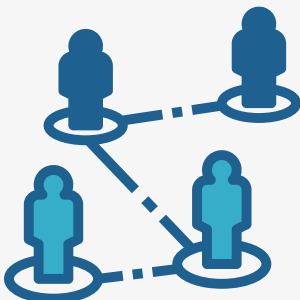
The survey was sent by email to all licensed child care programs in Maine and followed up by additional outreach from MaineAEYC, FCCAM, Head Starts, and YMCA leadership, and was completed between March 26th and April 5th, 2021.

METHODOLOGY



The survey represents the responses of a non-randomized sample of 470 individuals who own or lead one licensed child care program or several programs (as indicated by their answer to question 4). In total the data represents 598 licensed child care programs, or 37% of licensed programs in Maine. 54% of respondents come from family child care homes, 9% from licensed small facilities, 2% from out of school time programs, and 35% from center-based child care, including nursery schools, Head Starts, and YMCAs.

DEMOGRAPHICS



The respondents represent providers in all 16 counties in Maine, with percent of respondents from each county falling within 1% of the percent of licensed programs in that county compared to all licensed programs in Maine. Cumberland County was overrepresented by 3% and York County was underrepresented by 2.5%. Given the constantly changing and widely varying nature of the COVID-19 crisis, the analysis from this survey is intended to present the experiences of the respondents, as captured in the moment that they take the survey, which may show trends in the experiences of the field and industry at large.

RESULTS OVERVIEW

THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY HIGHLIGHT WHY THE ADDITIONAL FEDERAL RELIEF FUNDS PASSED IN DECEMBER 2020 AND THE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF DEDICATED FEDERAL FUNDS FOR CHILD CARE COMING TO MAINE IN 2021 ARE SO IMPORTANT. THEY CAN HELP ADDRESS STAFFING CHALLENGES WITH A FOCUS ON THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE, AS WELL AS ACCESS TO CHILD CARE, WITH A FOCUS ON SUPPORTING FAMILIES.

Top challenges for child care programs this year

TOP 3 ANSWERS FROM FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

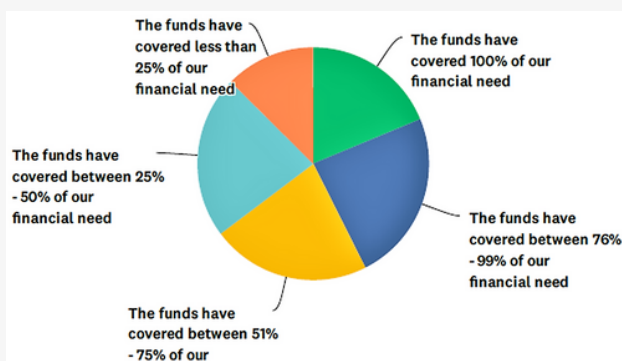
- 43% I HAVE A GROWING WAITLIST (CAN'T MEET THE DEMAND).
- 34% I AM UNDER-ENROLLED (CAN'T FILL OPEN SLOTS).
- 29% I AM OPERATING AT A DEFICIT.

TOP 3 ANSWERS FROM CHILD CARE CENTERS

- 58% I AM UNDERSTAFFED.
- 44% I AM OPERATING AT A DEFICIT.
- 43% I HAVE A GROWING WAITLIST (CAN'T MEET THE DEMAND).

How have the relief funds you have received so far offset the financial impact of COVID-19?

Less than 20% of licensed programs that responded in this survey reported that all their financial needs had been met by relief funds received between spring of 2020 and spring of 2021



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| Covered 100% of financial need | 18.76% | 82 |
| Covered 76%-99% of financial need | 23.80% | 104 |
| Covered 51%-75% of financial need | 22.20% | 97 |
| Covered 25%-50% of financial need | 22.65% | 99 |
| Covered less than 25% of financial need | 22.65% | 55 |
| Total | | 437 |

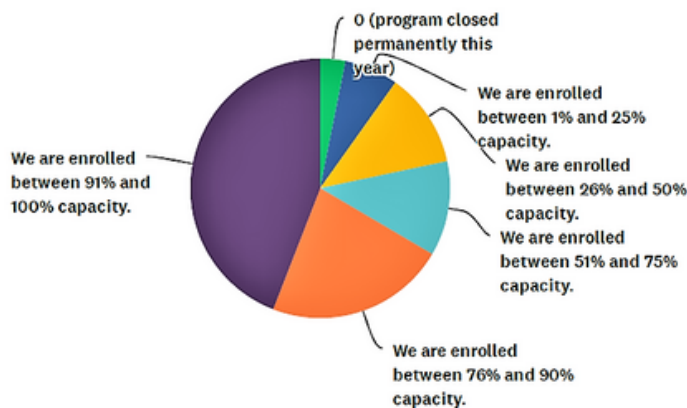
WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ENROLLMENT?

WHILE 95% OF LICENSED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ARE OPEN, MANY HAVE CONTINUED TO EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL STRUGGLE THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC. ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO UNDERSTAND THIS IS TO LOOK AT ENROLLMENT VERSUS LICENSED CAPACITY. IF A PROGRAM IS ONLY ENROLLED AT 50% THEN THEY ARE LIKELY BRINGING IN ABOUT 50% OF THE REVENUE THAT THEY WOULD NORMALLY USE TO COVER COSTS.

WE FOUND THAT THE BEST WAY TO LOOK AT THIS DATA WAS BY COMPARING TWO CHARTS, ONE FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE AND ONE FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS, SINCE YOU CAN SEE THAT MOST FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN MAINE ARE MORE FULLY ENROLLED AT THIS TIME THAN CHILD CARE CENTERS.

Family Child Care

Answered: 254 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| 0 (permanently closed) | 3.15% | 8 |
| enrolled between 1%-25% capacity | 6.69% | 17 |
| enrolled between 26%-50% capacity | 11.81% | 30 |
| enrolled between 51%-75% capacity | 11.81% | 30 |
| enrolled between 76%-90% capacity | 22.44% | 57 |
| enrolled between 91%-100% capacity | 44.09% | 112 |

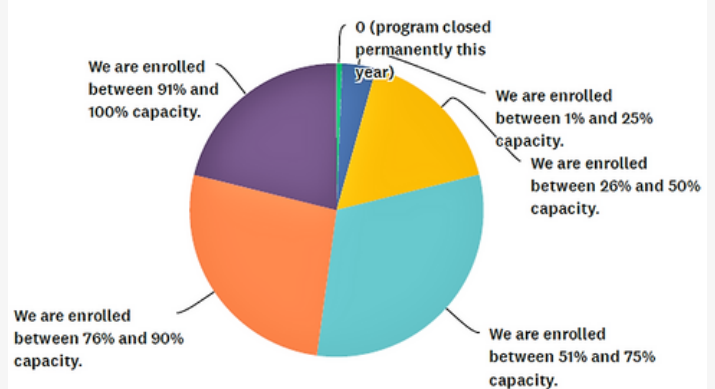
Total

254

For family child care respondents, who are experiencing lower enrollment, 42% have done so purposely to mitigate COVID-19 risks, 33% have kept below their capacity to follow health and safety guidelines, and 37% have seen less interest in group care from parents.

Center Based Child Care

Answered: 161 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|----|
| 0 (permanently closed) | 0.62% | 1 |
| enrolled between 1%-25% capacity | 3.73% | 6 |
| enrolled between 26%-50% capacity | 16.77% | 27 |
| enrolled between 51%-75% capacity | 31.06% | 50 |
| enrolled between 76%-90% capacity | 26.71% | 43 |
| enrolled between 91%-100% capacity | 21.12% | 34 |

Total

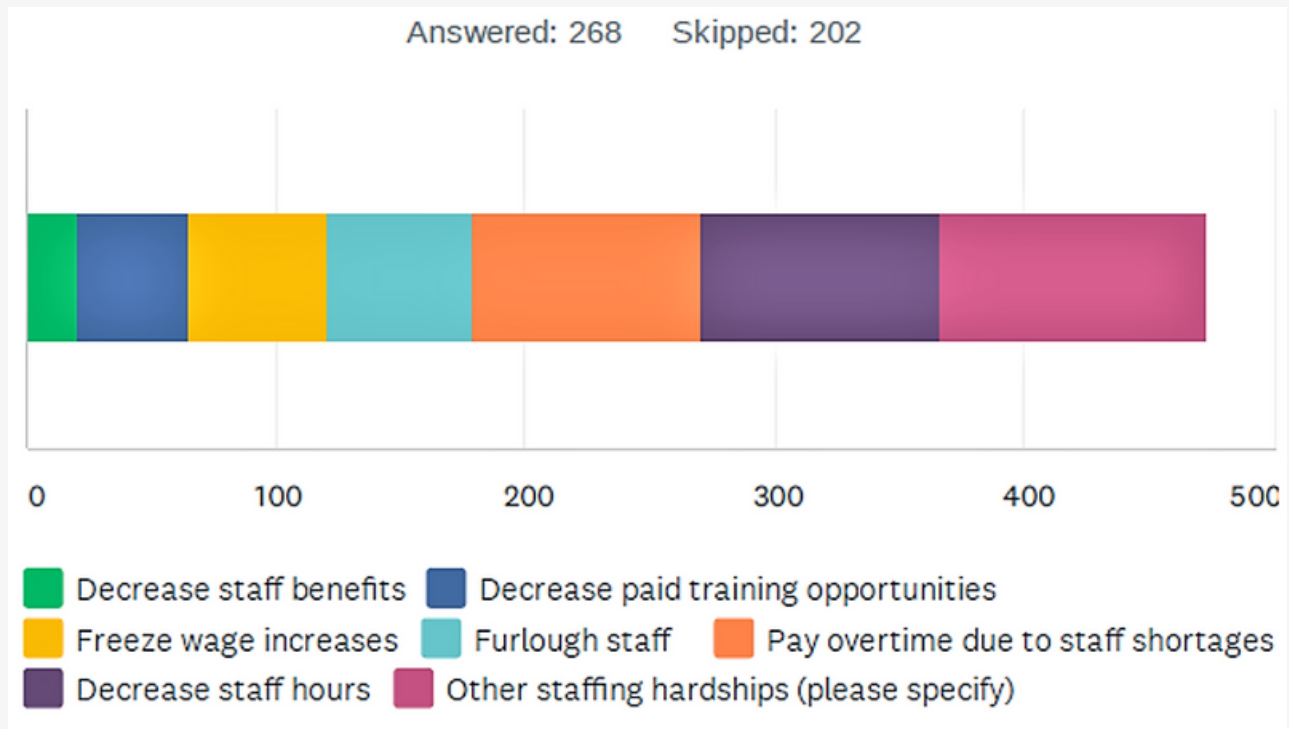
168

For child care center respondents, who are experiencing lower enrollment, 52% have seen less interest in group care from parents, 48% have had to stay below capacity due to staffing shortages, and 38% have kept below their capacity to follow health and safety guidelines.

IMPACTS ON THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

RESPONDANTS INDICATED IF THEY HAD TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

FURLOUGH STAFF, FREEZE WAGE INCREASES, DECREASE STAFF BENEFITS, DECREASE STAFF PAID TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, DECREASE STAFF HOURS, PAY OVERTIME DUE TO STAFF SHORTAGES.



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Decrease staff benefits | 7.46% | 20 |
| Decreased paid trainings opportunities | 16.42% | 44 |
| Freeze wage increases | 20.90% | 56 |
| Furlough staff | 22.01% | 59 |
| Pay overtime due to staff shortages | 33.96% | 91 |
| Decrease staff hours | 35.82% | 96 |
| Other staffing hardships (specify) | 39.93% | 107 |
| Total Respondents | | 268 |

STAFFING HARDSHIPS

SAMPLES OF OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

STAFFING SHORTAGES

- I have been unable to fill open positions.
- We lost so many staff this past year.
- There is no one available to hire so I can't take on more children until I can hire.
- I am unable to find quality staff. Or ANY staff at this point
- We have employment opportunities but can't find anyone. Therefore, we are not operating at full capacity and have 13 children on our wait list.
- As the director I am also having to teach due to the lack of staff.
- We have had to close our preschool room, and are now only operating with one classroom and one teacher in the infant and toddler room, with a maximum of 4 children on any given day. We are licensed for 20.

HEALTHY AND SAFETY

- I had two teachers take a leave of absence because of COVID.
- We let our older staff stay home due to risk this past year.
- Staff have had to quarantine and miss work unpaid. We continue to struggle with staff being out do to quarantining requirements of their children or themselves.

REMOTE SCHOOL

- We had to have extra staff on site to support remote learning with our school-age kids.
- Staff have had to take extra time off and leaves of absence due to public school closure and needing to be home with their own children.

UNPREDICATILITY

- I had to increase staffing hours due to changing age groups of children served and COVID protocols.
- Staff have struggled through no lunch breaks, mandatory overtime, and denied time off requests just so we could stay open.
- Every month we have days and weeks of losing staff to COVID exposure, paying all staff if they are out due to testing, exposure or illness.

CLOSURES & FINANCIAL STRUGGLE

- I had to close due to low numbers and inability to find staff.
- I'm not able to hire staff with the lower income I have coming in, due to lower enrollment.

STRATEGIES TO RETAIN STAFF

- We are fortunate to have had the support of Head Start and were able to continue to pay our staff and receive federal funding to support the additional expenses.
- Increased wages to hire quality people and increased wages for those employees already hired. We're not operating with full enrollment of children so with higher wages not at full capacity has made it challenging and put us close to a permanent closure.
- I have kept all my staff and kept my early care and education program going. I did this by increasing wages (\$3-\$5/hour per employee) and offering paid training hours (up to 30 hours) to incentivize staff to stay. My PPP loan/grant helped with this strategy, but I also had to increase parent tuition and was not able to give myself a raise along with my teachers.



THE IMPACT OF 2020-2021 ON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS, THE ADMINISTRATORS AND OWNERS, AND THE TEACHERS AND STAFF...

“WE’VE FACED MOMENTS WHEN WE WEREN’T SURE WE’D SURVIVE THIS, AND ALMOST HAD TO CLOSE.” ~JENNIFER, MAINE CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Employers, essential workers, K-12 teachers, and parents all deeply appreciated child care programs this year. Those who work in child care appreciated their families and communities. But what has it been like to work in child care? When we asked teachers and leaders about their experience from spring 2020 to spring 2021, we heard about anxiety, stress, resilience, remote work, and cleaning...so much cleaning.

"This year has been emotionally, physically, and mentally draining."

"My hands are raw from cleaning."

"Just stress, lots of stress."

"It was awful, but we are resilient."

Directors and teachers reflect back to the early weeks and describe the struggle to find and purchase enough of the essential items they needed to stay open.

"We spent weeks driving to multiple places every weekend to find cleaning supplies, toilet paper, gloves, masks, etc. They were in short supply for a long time and the costs went up."

After a year, some folks working in early care and education are talking about feeling burnt out, having low morale, and struggling to find the energy to continue. Some describe how close they came to closing and how overwhelming it was to try and stay open.

"This past year has taken a huge toll on myself both mentally and physically; having to keep up with all the mandates and extra cleaning, social distancing and being a teacher for elementary school kids, while also caring for and educating all the younger kids without enough space to do so was so overwhelming."

"I have never been more stressed or overwhelmed with the weight and responsibility of keeping people safe and providing education and care for children and families who need to work. I worked so hard and was overwhelmed. I think I've experienced some PTSD as a result of this experience. I questioned - and still am - whether I can keep it going or want to continue to do this work."

“stressed”

“anxiety”

“overwhelming”

Teachers and staff describe their own anxiety and that of the children in their care. They explain how they had to use all their paid time off during COVID-19 quarantining days or temporary closures and have no time left to use for their own vacation or mental health days.

"There's been a great deal of anxiety all the way around. Even in the children. We've seen a huge uptick in adverse behaviors which I attribute to children trying to process big feelings and the uncertainty of the world."

"We have had to work many more hours than usual. This takes away from our own families and their needs. We have to clean more and teach elementary school children, all while teaching and caring for younger children."

"This year has definitely impacted morale. We worked longer hours, we were often short-staffed, and we were always worrying about getting COVID and bringing it home to our families. We worked with all the ever-changing guidelines. We had to take on additional roles like deep cleaning every day as well as teaching."

Directors, administrators, and owners describe the impact on their jobs, their finances, and their own health. They explain the strain of working 50-70 hour weeks, having to cut their own salaries in order to pay their employees

“struggling”

"I re-opened to accept subsidy for essential workers, and I did not increase rates on families enrolled at the time the pandemic hit. I enrolled school-age children on subsidy at less than half my tuition rate to help families with remote school. I did all this to support my community at a significant financial loss."

"We have been struggling for more than a year. We finished 2020 with NEGATIVE \$31,000 and would have had to close without the PPP LOAN. We lost 8 staff in 3 months."

"I've exhausted my own savings to stay open and provide whatever is needed for my families and their children, from academic instruction to mental health support."

"Staff absences were high; staff could not find child care for their own children; advertising has resulted in no candidates for hire, retention is uncertain; relief funds have been extremely low or non-existent; we had to re-locate to another building; the list goes on."

Knowing whether a child care program is open or closed only tells us a fraction of the story. There is so much more going on that helps explain the experience of teachers and staff that work with our youngest children in Maine. Enrollment numbers are an important part of the narrative that can explain why some programs have operated at a loss month after month.

"I can think of nothing more challenging than this past year. Operating at 60% capacity as a non-profit that relies almost entirely on tuition has been beyond challenging. There are days you cry on your way to work and on your way home and lay awake at night thinking of ways to cover your costs all while keeping everyone positive and upbeat. It is so taxing on one's overall health."

"We were in the middle of an expansion last year when Covid hit. We almost lost our child care program because 80% of our families withdrew."

"We were at low enrollment and we bounced payroll multiple times in 2020/2021. I stayed open for 5 months with only 4 kids enrolled because those parents needed me! It financially put me in the negative"

"Due to the CDC guidelines, we were unable to serve at our max capacity. I felt like we were letting our community down by not being able to care for all the children who have needed care so that their parents could work. We also can't cover our costs with low enrollment. I do not know how much longer we can hold on in this manner."

For the larger family child care and center-based programs, the difficulty around having enough teachers and staff to stay open came up over and over in their survey responses. They wrote about having staff that had to leave the field due to their own high-risk status, or who had to stay home with their school-age children during school closures and hybrid models, or those who decided the stress and uncertainty was too much, particularly in a low wage job that often doesn't include health insurance and other fringe benefits.

"I had 4 teachers out of 8 in my child care program that could not return in Sept. because their children were doing hybrid classes in the local school district. This made August an extremely stressful month for me as the director. When families started pulling their children out of the program, I almost made the decision not to reopen...but we persevered!"

"It has been rough is an understatement. Lack of staff has been my biggest struggle. We were operating at two locations, and have been reduced to one site, because we went from 14 teachers to 6."

"This past year has been exhausting and discouraging. Lack of early childhood teachers has been tricky to say the least. Most discouraging is that there seems to be no end in sight. I went from having 50 applications years ago to no applications. My program has suffered not having qualified staff with early childhood degrees."

“discouraging”

Early care and education programs responded to the changes around them with innovation and ingenuity. They quickly moved most of their day outside. They added new cleaning routines and new drop off and pick up procedures. They reconfigured classrooms, routines, and staffing to support elementary school remote learning.

“tired”

"We changed our program completely. We moved everything outside. We only had a preschool group and a group of school-age children. We cut out our infant program and our toddler program to keep our group contained and distanced."

"We were running 2 preschool classrooms, an infant room, a toddler room, and a before/after school program. Then March 2020 came and the world stopped. In April we dropped from 40 children a day down to 12 with no infants or toddlers. We combined the preschool and school age children, spent our days outside as much as possible, and stayed opened the best we could."

"It has been very stressful doing all the virtual meetings and school work with elementary school children on top caring for all the little ones we have. We helped our families that needed this, but we are very tired. Running on fumes at this point."

For some child care programs in Maine, the impact of this past year was a permanent closure. While Maine is lucky that only about 10% of programs have closed permanently, and new ones have opened, the closures that did happen have deeply impacted early educators, directors, families, children, and their communities.

“health risks”

"The hardest part of this past year was closing after 25 years of running a family child care program and leaving my daughter who was with me for 20 years without a job."

"I couldn't teach because I have a compromised immune system and take care of my 90-year-old mother who has also has a compromised immune system. My co-teacher quit because her partner has a compromised immune system. I depend on my income so it was a hard hit financially."

"I work alone in a family child care and had to close due to health risks. I lost a year of wages. My child care will never make up the losses. My savings are almost gone. To open back up would be like building a new child care. You can't do it with money you don't have."

"Closing my school was the hardest part of this year. I'm looking at a possible different career after teaching for over two decades. Dealing with the depression of not working has been the hardest! I've taught nursery school for 23 years and not seeing the children daily was a sudden and unexpected change."

Don't forget about ME

"Remote learning means increased costs for child care providers"
~Chrissie

"We are trying to help keep parents in the workforce by providing spaces for remote learning, but that requires additional staff. Who pays those wages?"
\$50 Billion for Child Care



Don't forget about ME

"I had to stop doing a job that I loved because the pandemic created an environment that unfortunately wasn't safe for me as a high risk person."
~Alyssa

"It has been the hardest year to leave behind an already struggling early childhood center since the pandemic had effected them too. I have struggled with knowing those kids and the staff need my help now more than ever but I had to put my own health first. program."
\$50 Billion for Child Care





THE HARDEST DECISIONS

There so many hard decisions that leaders and teachers in child care programs had to make. In thinking about the hardest decision, they had to make this year, folks wrote about whether to close, how long to stay closed, whether to open, protocols around how to open, how to keep everyone healthy, how to handle financial struggles, how many children to serve and which families to serve, and how to best staff with CDC guidelines, families withdrawing, families applying, staff leaving, and families requesting remote school support.

"I moved my childcare out of my home, because my husband had cancer and I could not take any extra chances, but I also knew I couldn't stand not seeing the kids."

"I made the decision to take home no pay for several months to keep the child care program bills paid. The hardest decision was whether or not we needed to shut down the whole program for 10 days when a staff member tested positive. It felt awful. Our families work jobs that often do not pay them sick or personal time and many of them have no back up care."

"The hardest decision I had to make was closing our preschool classrooms because we did not have enough teachers to staff them."

"My hardest decision was whether to take on elementary school children. Supporting remote school has had the biggest impact on my program. I am one person helping 4 children complete assignments in multiple grade levels for different teachers on top of caring for and educating the younger children in my program."

"We make decisions that weigh on us and collectively they take a toll... staff needing to quarantine for two weeks because of a cold, telling parents their child cannot attend while they are (mildly)sick, telling staff we do not have a substitute for a well-deserved day off."

Child care program leaders have been impressed by the strength and resilience of children, families, early educators and staff, themselves, and their communities.

"We have been inspired by the resilience of our children, our families and ourselves. The most amazing resilience we have seen this year is in the children. Our 3-5 year-old kiddos have adjusted beautifully to distancing, to constant sanitizing and washing of hands, and mostly to wearing masks, so much more than we ever thought they would."

"The teaching staff has been AMAZING, adaptable and there have been gifts from having lower enrollment. In many ways, quality has gone up in that we are communicating more frequently with families and with less children here they get more attention and there are less transitions throughout the day. Lower numbers have been a great experience, but it's not a financially sustainable situation."

"We had to shift how we deliver care and education for children and families and some teachers have had to take on roles vastly different than the one they were hired for. I couldn't be prouder of my team, although I know it has been a challenge."

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Maine's child care programs helped each other and worked together to help families. Some have been able to expand, taking on more children, and some are opening new sites.



"I signed up for the child care subsidy program to help 4 parents who trusted me during this crazy time."

"We were able to provide services to a family with a foster child that needed a child care placement."

"I just recently purchased my own commercial building so that I can double my child capacity and be able to help out more working parents in our community in need of child care."

"We extended our hours to include early care, evenings, weekends, and overnights as needed. We added staff and enrollment numbers when we were permitted to and are currently preparing to open a larger center to accommodate more of these families that are in desperate need of quality child care."

"I saved a child care program from closing by buying it and moving into the home where it is located."

"We network with several other child care programs in our area, sending them potential families that we cannot take and sharing helpful information."

SUPPORTING CHILDREN



IN SPRING 2020 MANY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS THAT CLOSED FOUND WAYS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES VIRTUALLY AND FROM AFAR.

"Half of the children who attend my program have special education needs and many have very significant disabilities, where they are nonverbal and have challenging behaviors.

From March through June 2020, we created virtual classrooms (3 days a week), individual sessions (2 times a week) and parent coaching (1 time a week)."

"I drove around each weekend to every child's house to drop off new activities and projects for the upcoming week. I zoomed with my children each day for 3 months."

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ACROSS THE STATE EMBRACED AND IMPROVED THEIR NATURE-BASED LEARNING, WITH NEW OUTDOOR ROUTINES, AND IN MANY CASES, LEARNING AND PLAYING OUTSIDE ALL DAY.

"We reimagined our program and have run an all-outdoor preschool."

"The program spent 4-5 hours a day outside weather permitting. We built an outdoor napping space so we could move entirely outdoors, and have remained so."

"We operated 85% outside, making sure all kiddos and staff have all-weather gear."

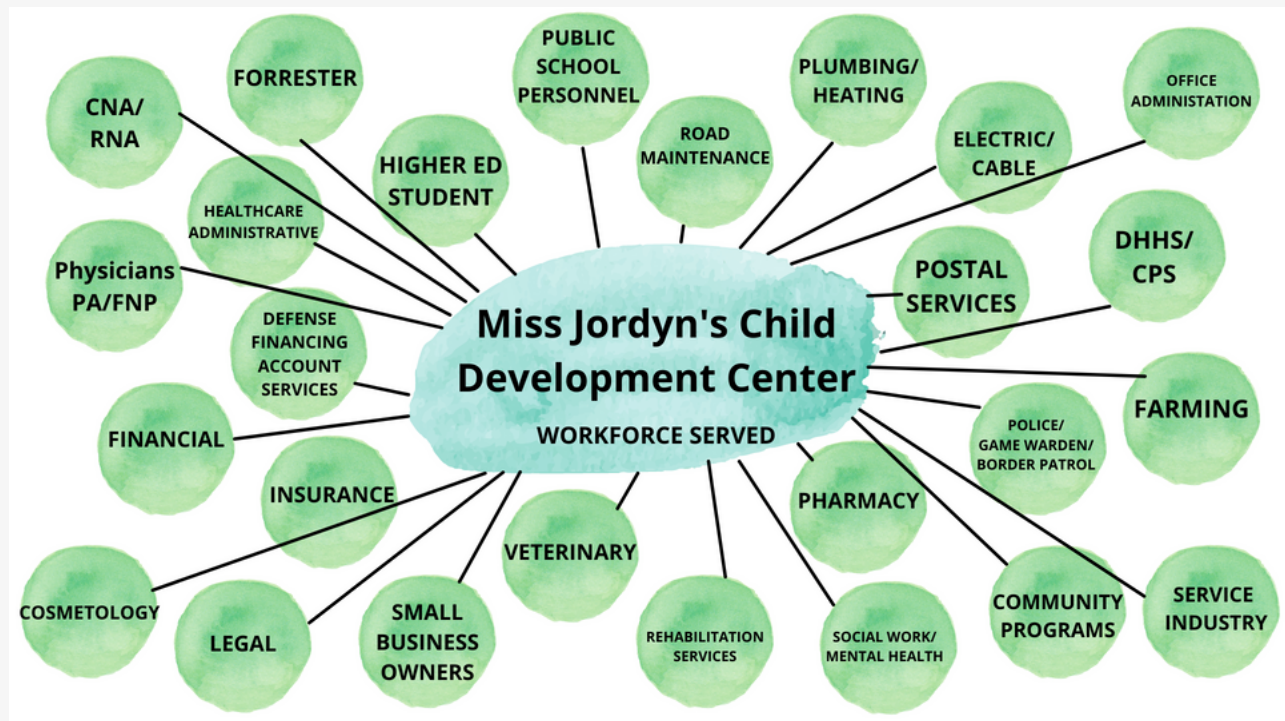
ONE OF THE MOST COMMON WAYS THAT CHILD CARE PROGRAMS RESTRUCTURED AND SUPPORTED THEIR COMMUNITIES FROM 2020-2021 WAS BY CARING FOR AND EDUCATING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN.

"I have supported all of my families with providing extra hours of care without charging them extra. I knew we were all faced with uncertainty and that we were in this together."

"I helped many families with remote learning that needed to work part time, and could not afford child care."

"We staffed our school age classroom with 4 full time teachers when we only needed 2 to cover ratios and capacity."

SUPPORTING THE ECONOMY



Child care programs across Maine stayed open, re-opened, or partially opened, often to dedicate their limited resources to first responders, frontline workers, and healthcare professionals.

"We stayed open for first responders."

"We offered child care for essential hospital workers in our community."

"I remained open for the families I serve. Most of the parents are teachers or work in the healthcare system."

"We were able to stay open during a pandemic! Our center is located in a senior living center. We took in new children whose parents were nursing home staff, supporting families that have been on the front line of this virus. The facility we are located in was under outbreak status for almost 5 months and we stayed open focused on the education and care of young children."

"Most of my enrollment involves children whose parents work at the local hospital...essential workers. I was available to meet all their child care needs, including continued education for their school-age children."

"I was on the list of providers in the state for essential workers needing child care. I operated over capacity (with licensing approval) for over a year. My husband and my daughter worked for me so that I wasn't out of compliance with ratios. It's been a hard year working 12-hour days, 5 days a week, over my typical capacity, with lots of extra cleaning."

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

"We started providing lunches so families wouldn't have to. We have been taking families that are in hardship and there are significant outstanding balances for some families because they don't have the money to pay right now."

"We became a flu vaccination site in the winter."

"We donated to the homeless shelter and sponsored a 5k walk/run in June for one of our families who lost a little one to cancer."

"Last spring, we donated sanitizing supplies to a Doctor's office that didn't have enough cleaning supplies."

"We did diaper deliveries from diaper banks and maintained rich contact with families any way we could – through technology, door dashes, yard visits, drive by, etc."

"We had a free spaghetti dinner for the community when covid first hit- boxed up and left on a table with names on families who needed it. We then brought boxed meals to the local grocery store staff, bank, and hospital who are all working so hard. We created a banner with kids saying "we are all in this together."

"We donated to the local food bank."

"We organized birthday driving parades and an Easter parade last year while we were closed. Once we were open again, we did "waving walks" to the local nursing home and sent handmade cards to them in place of our monthly visits. We also organized a blood drive to donate antibodies!"

"The children made thank you bags for our Firefighters and Police Officers. The children loved having them visit, and I think the first responders enjoyed the treats and visiting the children too."

"We provided gift baskets of food to our families for both Thanksgiving and Christmas."

"The children hung large signs on the fence for the firefighters next door."

"We served over 35,000 meals over the past year in our community."

"We started offering mental health support to our community (families, children & staff), which has been so beneficial."

"During our shut down we served hot meals at a drive thru location in our community."

"I made sure the older folks from my church had food, I made plates for them daily and delivered a meal daily. I'm still doing that to help 5 older folks!"

WHAT IS NEXT?

Several early childhood program leaders write about their fears for the future of this profession and for the child care sector.

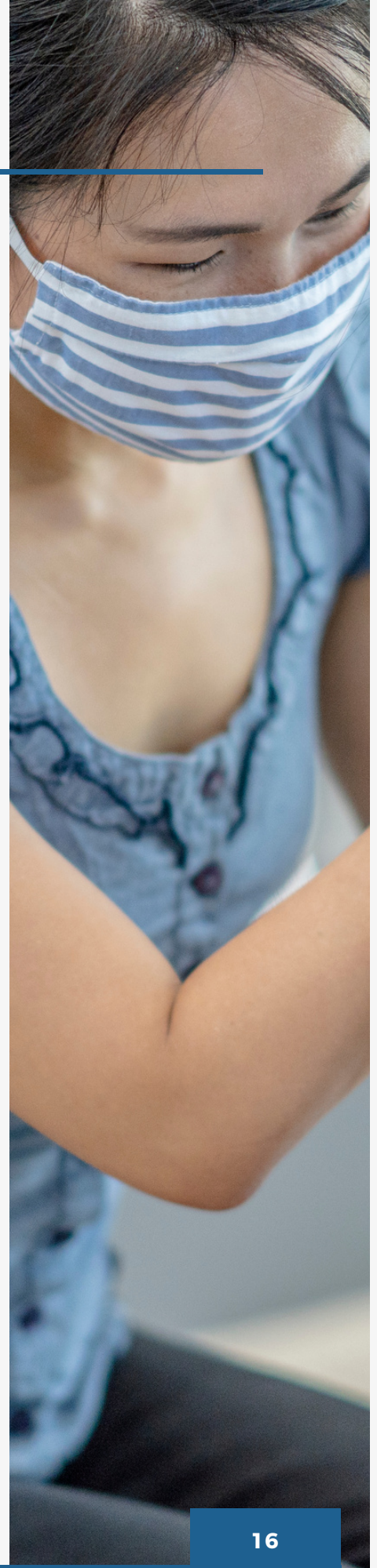
"We have found silver linings and have turned much of this year into a positive experience, but the field of early care and education continues to struggle to maintain its place among educators. We have been told that we are essential, but often see much lower levels of relief funding and support than our public-school peers."

"It has been such an emotional strain on everyone employed by child care programs. For the early education and care we provide, we are so underpaid. The field is not sustainable as families cannot pay what the true cost of "quality" is and therefore programs cannot pay their teachers wages that are aligned with their skills and experience. The field cannot attract the college educated professionals it requires within the current model."

"This past year changed a lot for our program. The biggest change has been with enrollment and staffing. I fear that staffing will never be the same and that people are not going to work in this field without higher wages. I don't see the commitment to growing public funding. I fear that tuition prices will have to rise to meet the demand of pay therefore making it impossible for families to afford child care. It's a scary time right now."

"We are downsizing in Fall of 2021 because the stress due to the lack of qualified early educators in Maine. We've lost a lot of teachers this year. We have a brand new building and we're not opening it next year."

How will programs move forward?



PROMISING PLANS & PROPOSALS

Working Together, Five Proposals that Will Strengthen Maine Child Care

- 2021 OCFS Plan to spend dedicated child care funds from American Rescue Plan Act
- Governor Mills plan to spend \$10 million in child care facility expansion and \$10 million to expand public PreK, with support for school districts to develop partnerships with licensed child care
- Senate President Jackson's proposal LD 1712 to increase access to quality child care and services for families with regional collaboration and coordination
- Speaker Ryan Fecteau's proposal, LD 1652, to recruit and retain early childhood educators through scholarships, apprenticeships, wage supplements, and career pathways
- Rep. Millett's proposal, LD 1678, with tax credits for programs, early educators, and families

