



How Child Care Challenges Affect Georgia's Workforce and Economy

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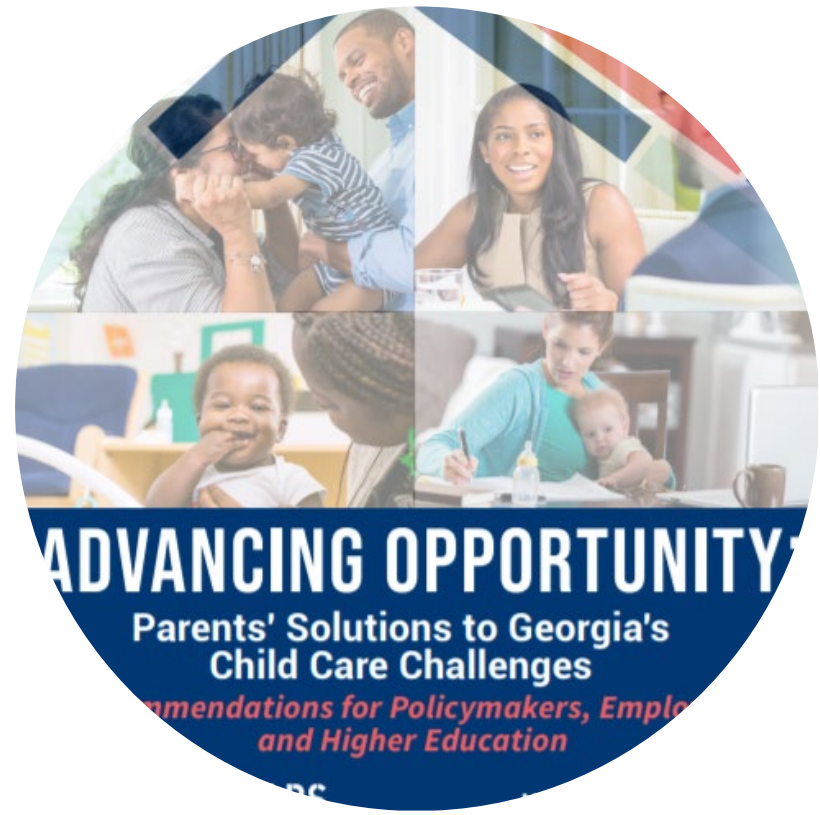
Alliance for Ready Students

Tim Cairl

Director, Education Policy

Metro Atlanta Chamber





"Simply Not Sustainable:"
Georgia Parents' Experiences During the COVID-19 Crisis

In May and June of 2020, GEEARS issued an online survey designed for Georgia parents or caregivers with children ages birth-five to better understand families' experiences during the COVID-19 crisis. The 465 respondents from 78 counties reported a range of disruptions to employment, family routines, and child care arrangements.*

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS TO BOTH THEIR EMPLOYMENT & CHILD CARE SITUATIONS SINCE THE PANDEMIC HIT.

- The majority of respondents (83%) either "strongly agreed" (43%) or "agreed" (40%) with the statement "the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted my home and family life."
- Over half (56%) of respondents indicated an adult in the household experienced job loss, furlough, or a reduction in pay or hours because of the pandemic.

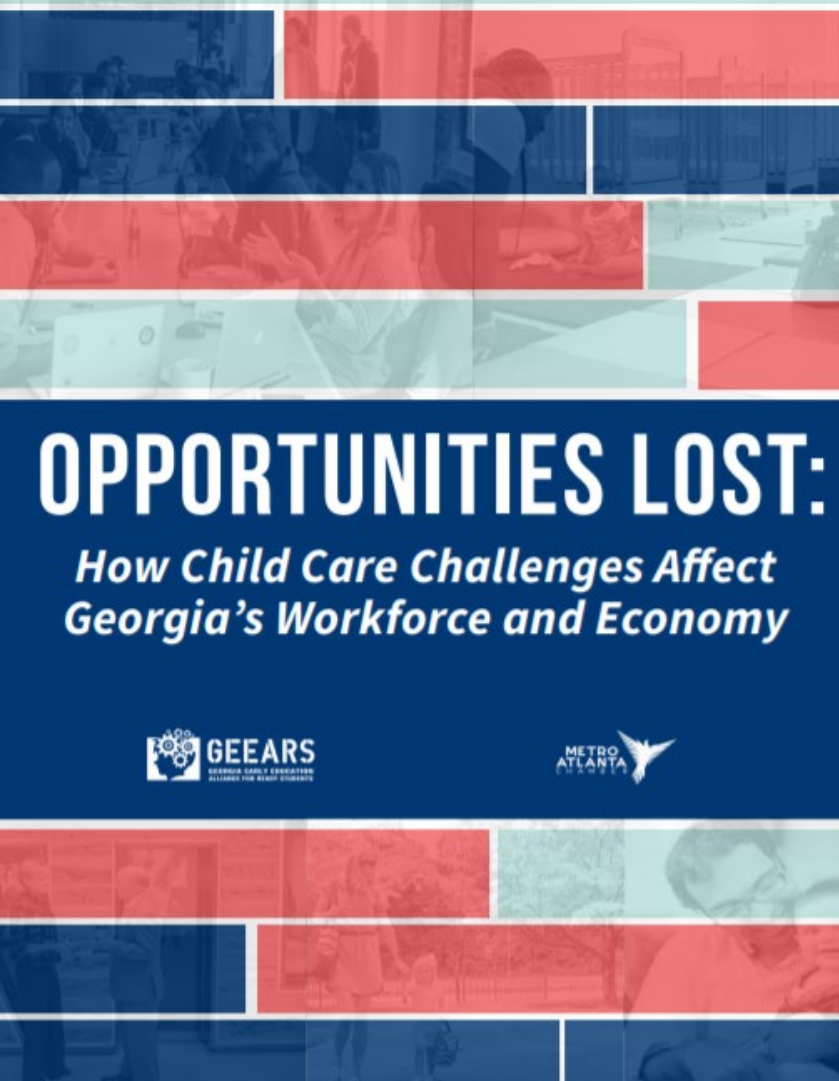
"With two adults working full time and trying to keep a four-year-old engaged, it's impossible. We feel we are doing nothing well, something always suffers: our work, our kids, our house, or us."

* 10% of respondents indicated they were either moderately or very concerned about job loss, furlough, or reduction of hours; only 10%





Part One: Opportunities Lost

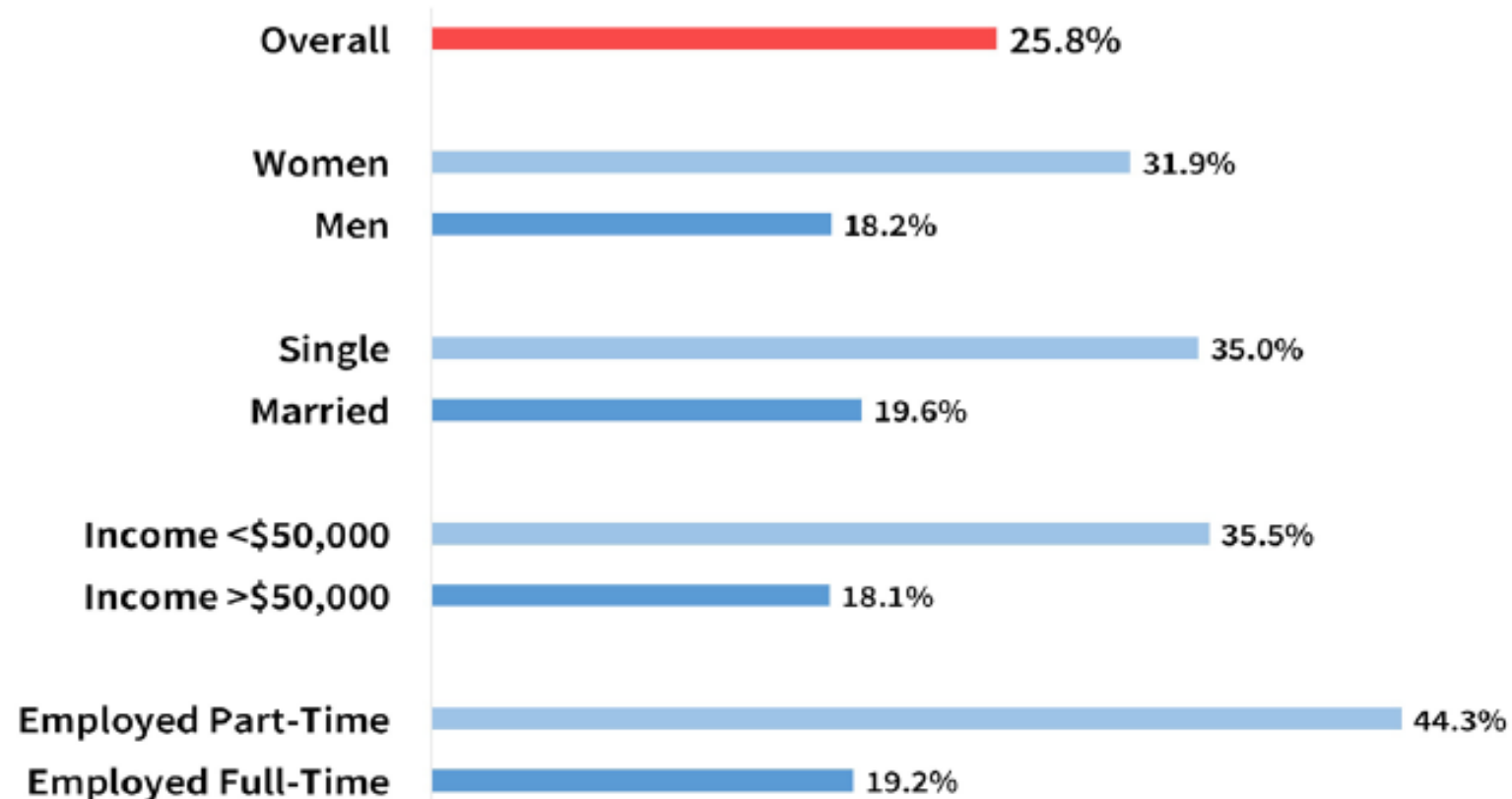




Long-Term Disruptions

“During the past 12 months, did you or anyone in the family have to quit a job, not take a job, or greatly change a job because of problems with child care?”

Incidence of Significant Job Change in Family (last 12 months) due to Problems with Child Care





Long-Term Disruptions

Child care challenges affect parents' participation in the workforce in a variety of ways

MORE THAN 1 IN 5

Georgia parents of children under five indicated that they had quit a job, school, or a work training program due to child care issues.

MORE THAN 1 IN 6
reported having turned down a *promotion at work* because of issues with child care.

Roughly **1 IN 20** Georgia parents of children under five reported having been fired as a result of missing work due to challenges with child care.




Short-Term Disruptions

Georgia parents are **missing days** of work, school, and work training as a result of child care challenges. In many cases, parents are missing a significant number of days:

- **Nearly 1 in 5** parents reported missing *more than one full week (6+ days)* of **work** in the past 6 months
- **Of enrolled parents,**
 - about **1 in 6** missed more than a full week of **school**
 - approximately **1 in 5** missed more than a week of **work training**
- **Georgia parents are also arriving late or departing early as a result of child care challenges**
 - **Nearly half of all parents** arrived late or left early from work in the past 6 months due to **child care challenges**
 - **About 1 in 5** arrived late 6+ days within that period



Economic Impact Analysis

Child care challenges lead to at least
\$1.75 BILLION IN LOSSES
in economic activity annually and
an additional **\$105 MILLION** 
in lost tax revenue.





	Economic Loss Estimate (Millions)	State Income Tax Revenue Loss (Millions)
Absences	\$331.1	\$19.9
Turnover	\$1422.1	\$85.3
Total	\$1753.2	\$105.2



Part Two: Advancing Opportunity

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITY:
Parents' Solutions to Georgia's
Child Care Challenges
*Recommendations for Policymakers, Employers,
and Higher Education*

Nature of Child Care Disruptions



- Lack of **affordable** child care
- Limited **availability** of child care, particularly **high-quality** options for young children
- **Inflexible** work schedules and the **absence** of **family-friendly work policies**
- **Sickness** or injury suffered by child; lack of **back-up** child care options



Broad Support for Workforce Solutions

- Participants expressed favorability for just about all of the policies they were asked to evaluate, such as **flex time**, **paid family leave** (acknowledgement it isn't widespread), and **on-site child care**.
- Value of **flexibility** and **quality** of supports over cost in most cases.





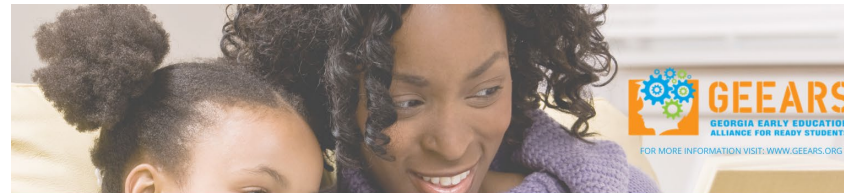
Support for Expansion of Child Care Subsidy, Georgia Pre-K, and Other Policy Solutions

- Child Care Subsidy
 - Belief that it is too restrictive as it relates to eligibility and number of children served
 - Uniform agreement that it should be expanded
- Georgia Pre-K
 - High level of satisfaction with Georgia’s Pre-K program
 - Many participants advocated for a similar approach that would support children younger than 4
- Other Policy Solutions
 - There was no shortage of solutions proposed by participants, including: scaling child care by income, separating personal sick days and child sick days, better wages for child care workers, more robust tax credits, and more substantial parental leave

Most indicated that child care is absent from the political discourse and there aren’t many elected leaders addressing the issue.



Part Three (?): Understanding Working Parents' Experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic

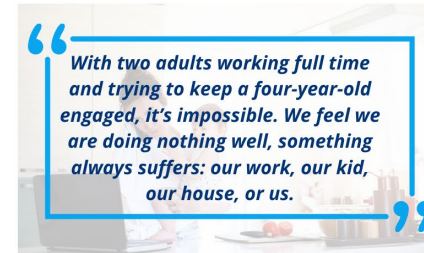


"Simply Not Sustainable:" Georgia Parents' Experiences During the COVID-19 Crisis

In May and June of 2020, GEEARS issued an online survey designed for Georgia parents or caregivers with children ages birth-five to better understand families' experiences during the COVID-19 crisis. The 465 respondents from 78 counties reported a range of disruptions to employment, family routines, and child care arrangements.*

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTIONS TO BOTH THEIR EMPLOYMENT & CHILD CARE SITUATIONS SINCE THE PANDEMIC HIT.

- The majority of respondents (83%) either "strongly agreed" (43%) or "agreed" (40%) with the statement "**the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted my home and family life.**"
- **Over half (56%)** of respondents indicated that an adult in the household had **experienced job loss, furlough, or a reduction in pay or hours because of the pandemic.**
- **Forty-five percent** indicated they were either **moderately or very concerned about the potential of job loss, furlough, or reduction of hours**; only 10% indicated they were not at all concerned.
 - Black respondents (45%) were more likely to report they were **very concerned** than their white (17%) counterparts.
 - Respondents without a four-year-degree (38%) were more likely to report they were **very concerned** than those with a bachelor's degree or higher (18%).

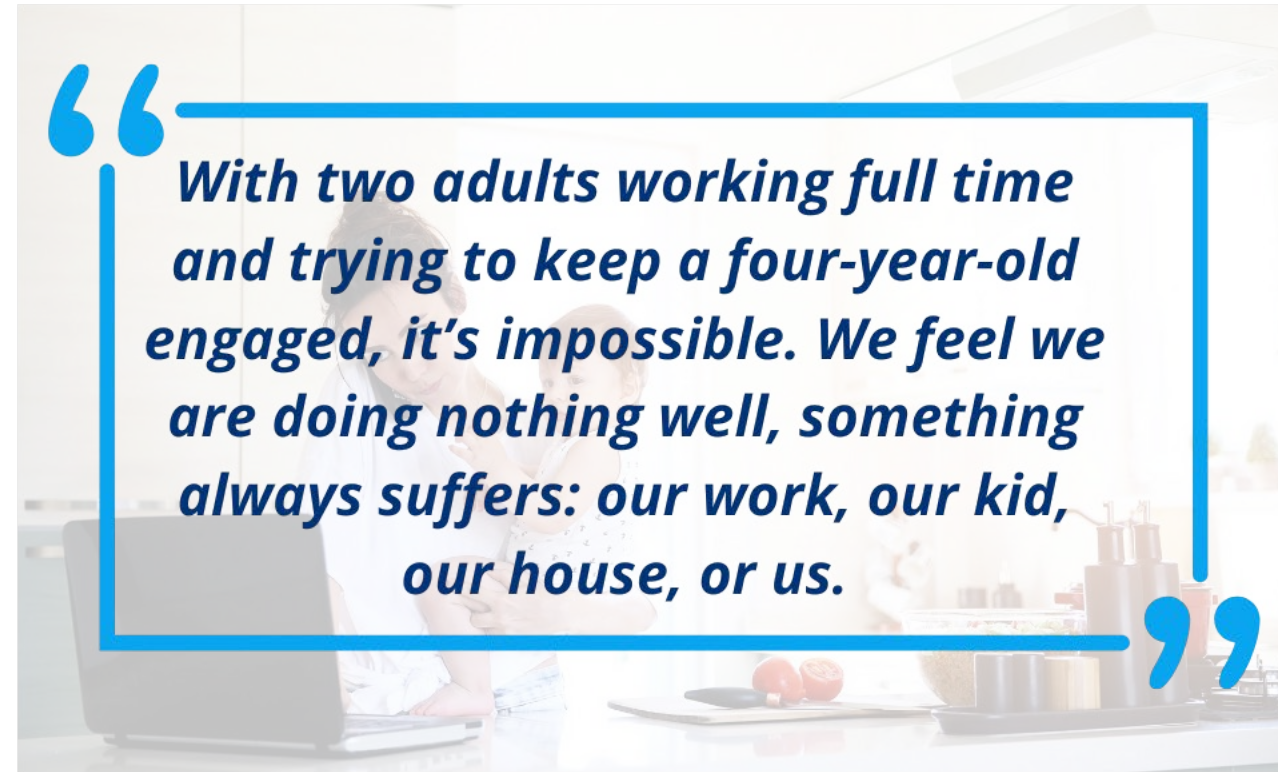


*Convenience sample responding to online survey included 465 respondents and was predominantly female (85%). Forty-seven percent of respondents identified as white (32% Black). Five percent reported they were of Hispanic/Latino origin. Respondents ranged in age from 16 to 65 years (M = 35). The majority (56%) were married. Forty-four percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Forty-eight percent were employed full-time, and 12% were employed part-time; 13% were stay-at-home parents, and 2% were full-time students.



Families have experienced significant disruptions to both their employment and child care situations since the pandemic hit

- The majority of respondents (**83%**) either “strongly agreed” (43%) or “agreed” (40%) with the statement “**the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted my home and family life.**”
- **Over half (56%)** of respondents indicated that an adult in the household had experienced job loss, furlough, or a reduction in pay or hours because of the pandemic.



On average, **families' child care arrangements look strikingly different** than they did before the pandemic hit.

RESPONDENTS REPORTING:

Primary arrangement for their young children was a **formal child care program** (center, school, or family child care home)

Primary arrangement for their young children was staying at **home with a parent or guardian**

BEFORE MARCH 13TH

70%

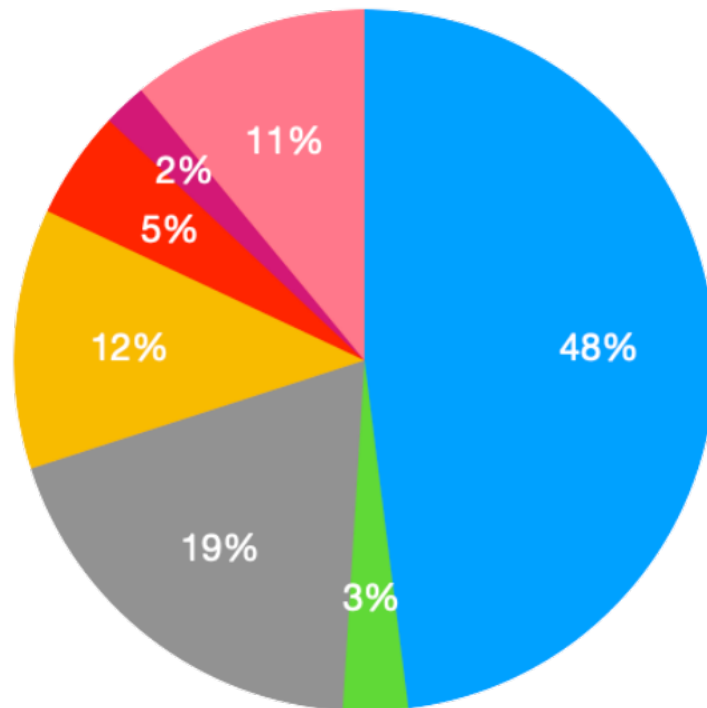
12%

CURRENTLY

13%

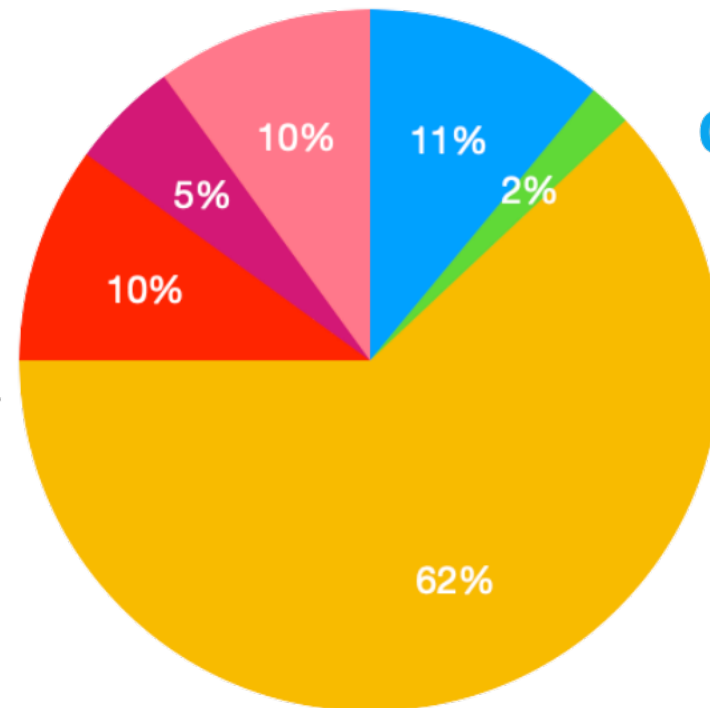
62%

BEFORE MARCH 13TH



- Child Care Center
- Family Child Care Home
- Pre-K (public or private)
- Parent or Guardian
- Family, Friend, or Neighbor
- Nanny or Babysitter
- Other

CURRENTLY



Parents and caregivers are **making significant adjustments and sacrifices** as they respond to new demands and attempt to juggle work and their children's needs.

Roughly **1 in 3** reported that they or another caregiver in the household **had alternated work hours with another parent/caregiver** in order to provide child care.

Roughly **1 in 3** reported that they or another caregiver in the household **had worked outside of normal business hours** in order to provide child care.

Roughly **1 in 3** reported that they or another caregiver in the household **had worked fewer hours** in order to provide child care.



Roughly **1 in 3** took **paid leave** in order to provide child care.

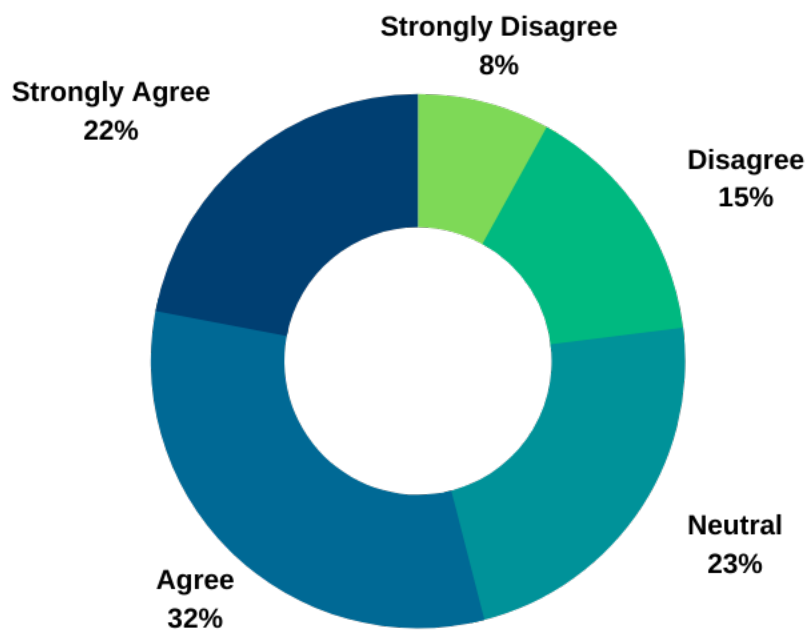
- Respondents with at least a 4-year degree were **twice as likely** to report taking **paid** leave compared to those without a bachelor's degree.

Roughly **1 in 5** took **unpaid leave** in order to provide child care.

- Respondents with less than a 4-year degree were approximately **5 times as likely** to take **unpaid** leave compared to those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

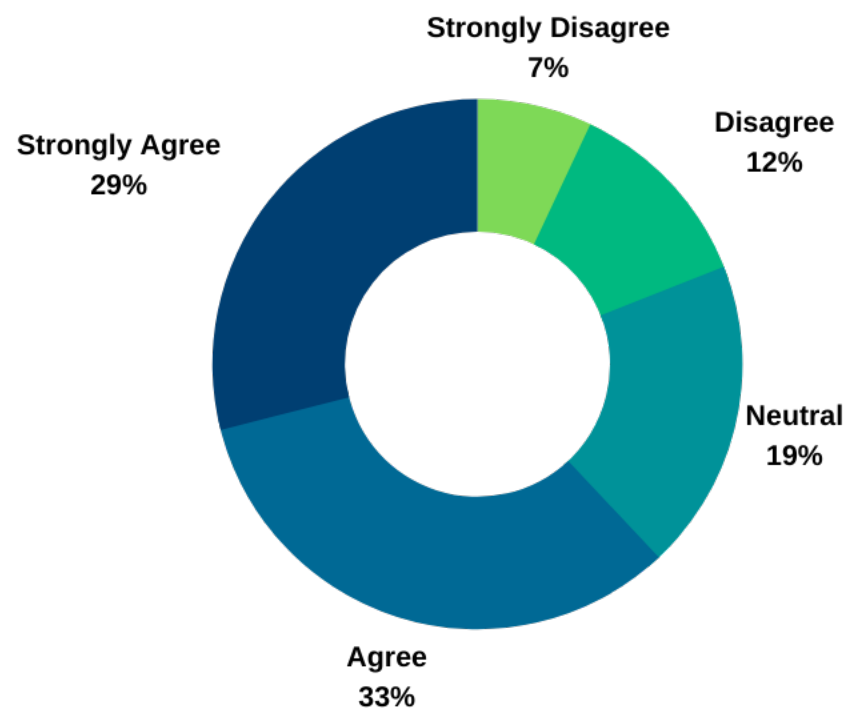
Three-quarters (75%) of respondents indicated their current stress levels were either somewhat or much higher than usual.

Parents and caregivers are concerned about the **impact of the pandemic on their children's development**.



"I worry that my child(ren)'s social, emotional, and/or cognitive development will suffer as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Parents and caregivers worry about the pandemic's **impact on their own mental health**.



"I worry about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on my own mental health."



MANY PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR
**CURRENT CHILD CARE AND EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS
ARE NOT SUSTAINABLE.**



“

I spend my days (and many nights) constantly struggling to juggle the demands of work and child care, and I feel like I am failing at both.

”

Only about **1 in 3** of respondents indicated that their current child care situation was **manageable**.



Employer Spotlight

Increasing availability and use of flexible work hours – DefenseStorm, Gas South, Mailchimp

Offering up to 60 days of back-up care for children or elder-care as well as online activities for children – Blackrock

Increasing paid family leave from 3 weeks to 6 weeks (ahead of schedule) – Mercedes-Benz USA

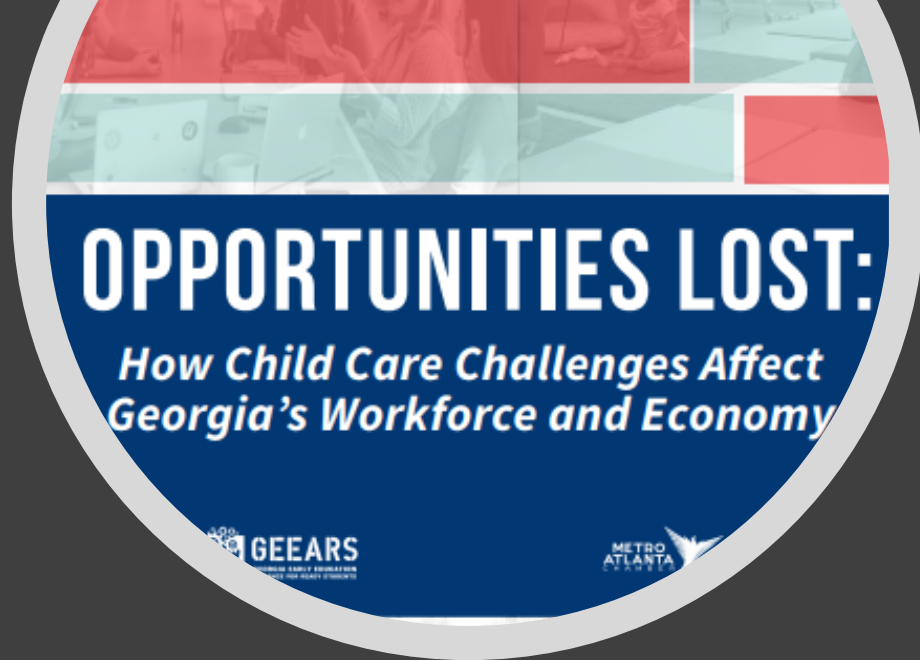
Partnering with SitterCity to provide back-up child care and offering free online tutoring services through Tutor.com – Truist

Reimbursing child care costs, increasing back-up child care, expanding partnerships with online education providers – Bank of America



Ongoing Concerns and Special Considerations

- **Overall stability of Georgia's child care and early learning system**
- **Stability of federal and state funding**
- **Availability of accessible, affordable child care when workplaces open**
- **Impact on:**
 - **single parents**
 - **student parents**
 - **those enrolled in worker training programs**
 - **essential employees and those with non-traditional hours**



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