

Staffing Shortages Due to Low Wages Are Driving the Child Care Crisis in New York

From March 15 – March 20 2023, the **Empire State Campaign for Child Care** surveyed more than 1,660 child care programs* from across New York State on the impact staffing shortages, defined as one or more staff roles that are currently unfilled, have had on their programs' ability to serve families in their area.

Expanded eligibility is an empty promise to New York's families without direct investment in the child care workforce.

Our first 1,660 responses reported:

28,462

children cannot receive care in their programs due to the workforce shortage

25,022

children are known to be on their waiting lists**

3,857

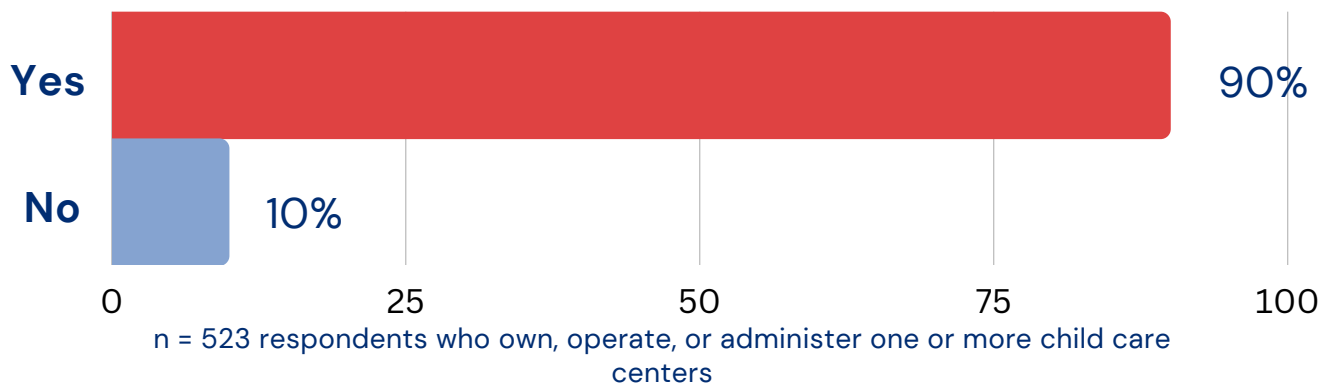
staff positions are unfilled in respondents' child care programs

766

classrooms are completely closed in respondents' center and afterschool programs due to understaffing

90% of child care centers are currently understaffed

"Are you currently experiencing a staffing shortage? (meaning one or more staff roles in your program are currently unfilled)"



Licensed capacity is not the whole story

OCFS reports New York's current licensed child care capacity (788,744) is approaching pre-pandemic capacity. While this marks an important milestone in New York's recovery, it is not the whole story.

Staffing shortages have left many programs operating far below capacity. Our survey shows over 750 classrooms are dark because they are completely unstaffed. Group family child care providers are halving their capacity and moving down to family child care designation because they cannot find qualified assistants.

Direct investment in workforce compensation and benefits is the only way to sustainably increase access for families.

Respondents experiencing a staffing shortage reported that:

70%

of home-based child care programs experiencing a staffing shortage could provide much-needed care for infants and toddlers if they were fully staffed.

67%

reduce capacity, close classrooms, or close their programs completely on short notice due to staff absences, leaving families to scramble for last minute care or miss work.

35%

close their programs earlier than they used to due to staffing shortages. Earlier closing times disproportionately strain the careers and earning potential of working mothers.

*Respondents were asked to include all programs they own, operate, or oversee in one survey response. Each result represents a range of one to 150 programs. Analysis of ongoing survey based on first 1,660 responses as of 3/20/23.

**Waiting lists are fully voluntary. Many programs do not keep a waiting list. Others cap their waiting lists at a number of their choice.



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