COVID-19 and child care: Attendance and communication with families

Results from a 2020 study of the Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grant Program

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed child care services in Minnesota and across the nation. To understand providers' experiences with the pandemic, an online survey was shared with child care providers between July 31, 2020 and September 9, 2020. A total of 1,898 center-based and family child care providers completed the survey. The survey asked child care providers* about their experiences related to a number of COVID-19 challenges. This fact sheet presents initial findings on the ways providers adapted their programs during COVID-19.

* The providers invited to participate were applicants (N = 5,297) to the Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grant Program, and thus, were a subsample of licensed and certified center-based programs and licensed family child care providers throughout Minnesota. These findings are from all providers that applied and responded to the survey, regardless of whether or not they received the grant.

In the past week, how does the average daily attendance compare to number of children enrolled?

- **Center-based**
  - A lot less: 30%
  - Slightly less: 28%
  - About the same: 32%
  - Slightly more: 5%
  - A lot more: 7%

- **Family child care**
  - A lot less: 30%
  - Slightly less: 20%
  - About the same: 32%
  - Slightly more: 4%
  - A lot more: 4%

The majority of family child care providers maintained about the same attendance levels relative to the number of children enrolled in their program. Center-based programs reported lower levels of attendance relative to enrollment.

How have provider's communication with families changed? (check all that apply)

- **92 percent** of center-based and **78 percent** of family child care providers changed the way they communicated with families during the pandemic.

- **Center-based**
  - Increased frequency of communication: 66%
  - Added new topics or procedures: 43%
  - Added new types of communication (ex. automated texts, hotline, newsletter): 39%

- **Family child care**
  - Increased frequency of communication: 51%
  - Added new topics or procedures: 35%
  - Added new types of communication (ex. automated texts, hotline, newsletter): 17%

What child care topics do families ask providers about given the pandemic-related guidelines? (check all that apply)

- **Center-based**
  - Ability of program to conform to health and safety standards: 60%
  - Availability of school-age care: 47%
  - Part-time care or flexible scheduling: 55%
  - Paying tuition if program is closed: 51%

- **Family child care**
  - Ability of program to conform to health and safety standards: 33%
  - Availability of school-age care: 45%
  - Part-time care or flexible scheduling: 44%
  - Paying tuition if program is closed: 33%

Source: Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grant Survey, 2020

This is one in a series of fact sheets from a study of Minnesota's Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grant program. For more information, visit: [https://www.childtrends.org/project/minnesota-child-care-policy-research-partnership](https://www.childtrends.org/project/minnesota-child-care-policy-research-partnership)