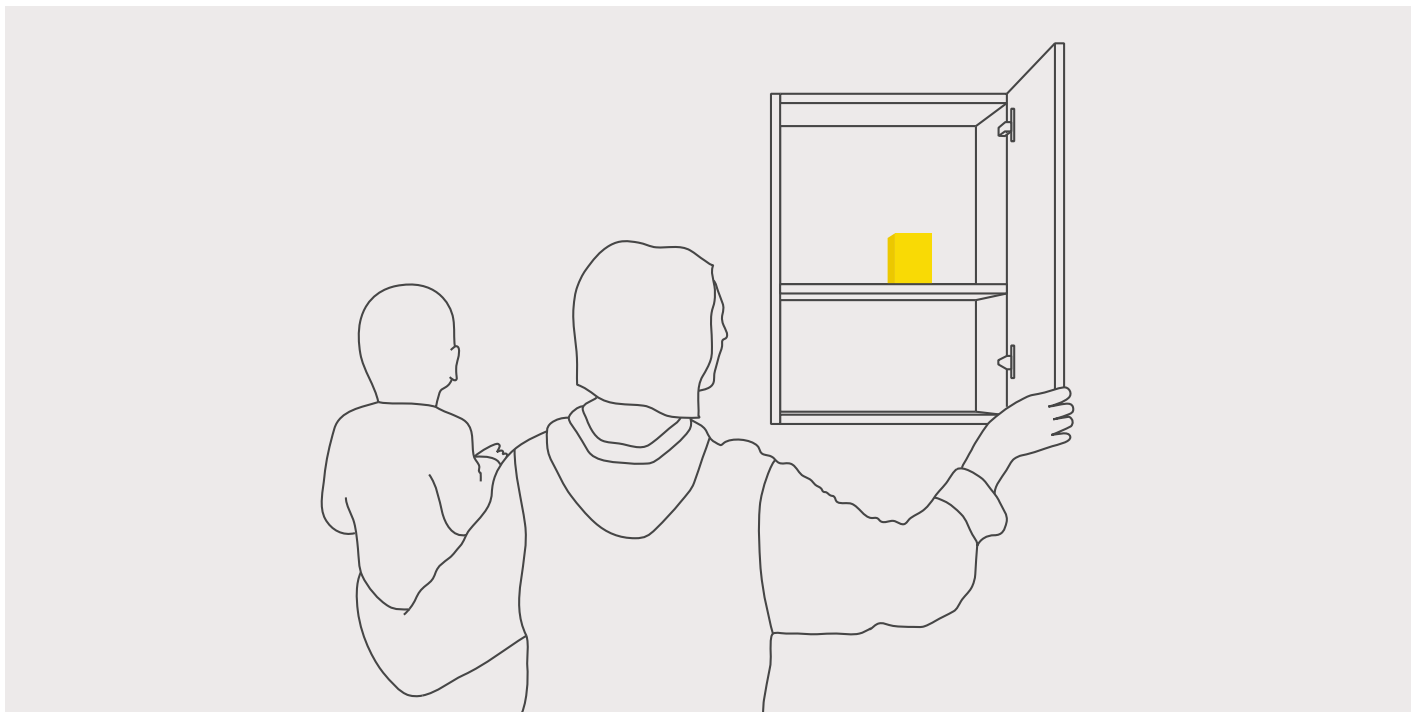


HOUSEHOLDS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND CHILD CARE PROVIDERS ARE STILL FACING HUNGER

“[Our biggest concern is] the uncertainty of how we will be able to afford the rising prices of groceries.”
Parent in Arizona

In late 2021, [we reported](#) on the significant number of households with young children that were experiencing hunger. Here we update these findings and add to them data about hunger among child care providers.



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WE MEASURED HUNGER USING SIX ITEMS DEVELOPED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

- The food that we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more.
- We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.
- Did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meal or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
- If yes, how often did this happen?
- Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?
- Were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

We calculated a total score for each parent or provider on these six items and classified participants as experiencing hunger if they reported two or more of these experiences. (i.e., if they have a score equal to or greater than 2).

U.S. HOUSEHOLDS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN ARE EXPERIENCING ELEVATED LEVELS OF HUNGER COMPARED TO BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

- Data from our household survey show that 18% of families with young children reported experiencing hunger prior to the pandemic. By October 2020, 30% of families reported hunger. The experience of hunger decreased gradually throughout 2021, yet remained above pre-pandemic levels. Since September 2021, the trend has again been on the rise; 23% of families with young children experienced hunger in February 2022.
- During the pandemic, families with young children have been benefiting from child nutrition waivers instituted during the pandemic to expand access to nutrition in school and care settings, including by allowing schools to distribute free meals to all children without first verifying family income. These child nutrition waivers will end on June 30th 2022 and have not yet been reauthorized. This is likely to exacerbate families' experiences of hunger.

“[Our biggest concern is] paying the utilities and getting groceries, right now it's one or the other but not both.”

Parent in Kansas

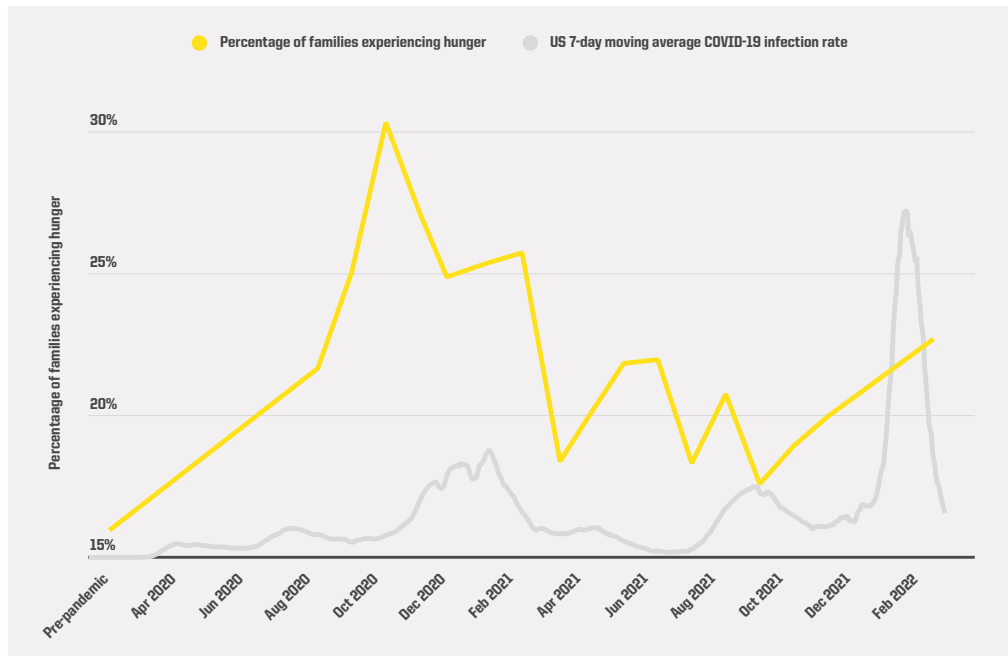
“We can barely get food for ourselves. We get very little food stamps now due to [my husband's] \$2 raise... We need help.”

Parent in Pennsylvania

“I have been feeding the kids rather than myself. Obviously when I'm hungry it's more likely to be a bad day for everyone as I am tired, cranky and less patient.”

Parent in Colorado

Trend of hunger among US families with young children



“Food stamps had been giving extra food stamp benefits for the last few months. Now that has stopped and the CTC has stopped, we are worried about the small food stamp benefit we do get being enough to feed us for a month.”

Parent in New York

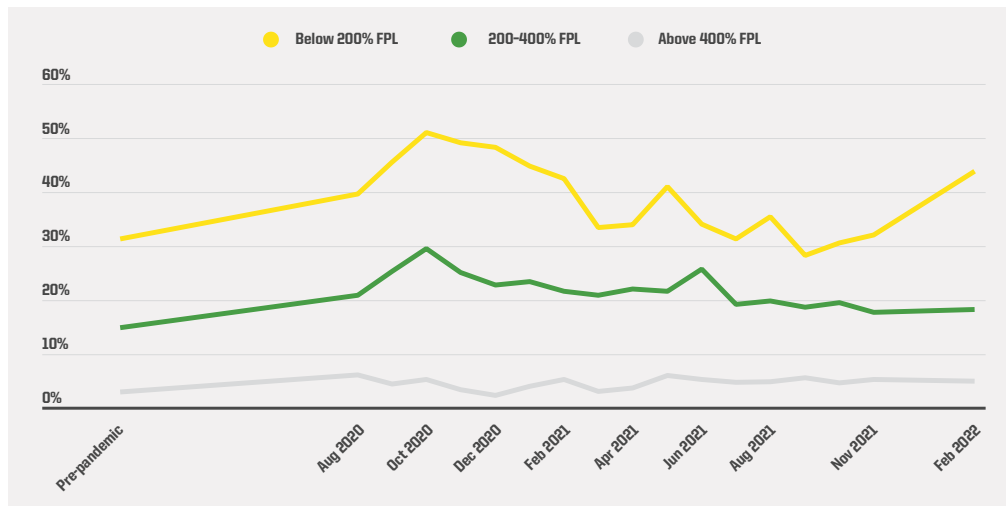
HUNGER EXPERIENCES VARY ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

- In our most recent survey in February, just under 25% of middle-income households (200–400% of the federal poverty level (FPL)) reported experiences of hunger, with rates increasing since December 2021. Families in this income range account for 30% of U.S. households with children. In contrast, only approximately five percent of higher-income families (above 400% FPL; accounting for 30% of U.S. households with children) reported hunger—levels that have been very consistent throughout the pandemic. Finally, a total of 45% of lower-income families (below 200% FPL; accounting for 40% of U.S. households with children) experienced hunger in our February survey. Compared to middle- and higher-income households, lower-income families have consistently indicated higher hunger rates throughout the pandemic and have exhibited a more profound increase in hunger rates since December 2021.
- Families with a young child with a disability have also reported higher levels of hunger throughout the pandemic, as well as a more pronounced increase in hunger rates since December 2021, compared to families that do not have a child with a disability.

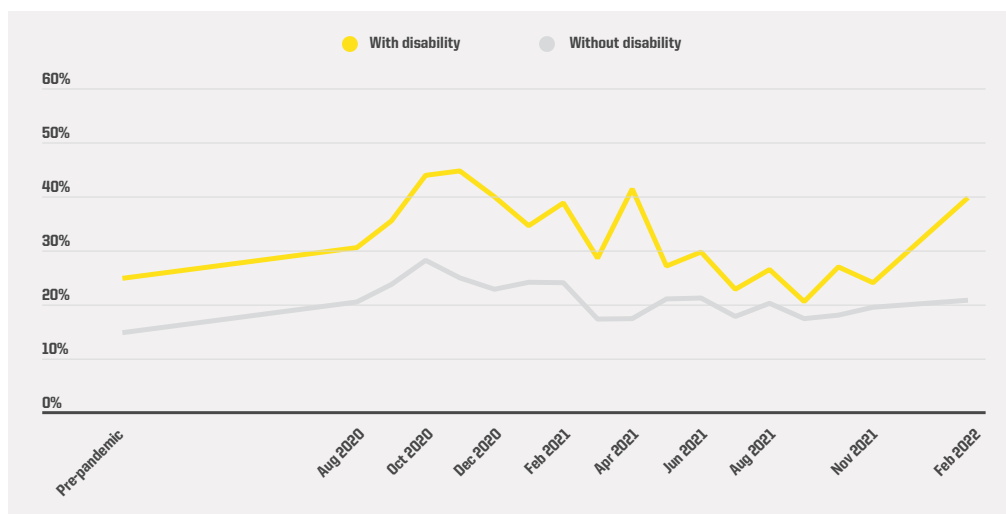
“We do not qualify for food stamps – we are over the low-income threshold just barely. This means that we have to scrape by with paying bills late, and [we are] unable to make ends meet each month. Food costs are rising, and we are unable to adjust.”

Center director
in Missouri

Trend of the percentage of families experiencing hunger, by income level



Trend of the percentage of families experiencing hunger, among those with and without a child with a disability



CHILD CARE PROVIDERS HAVE ALSO REPORTED CONCERNING RATES OF HUNGER

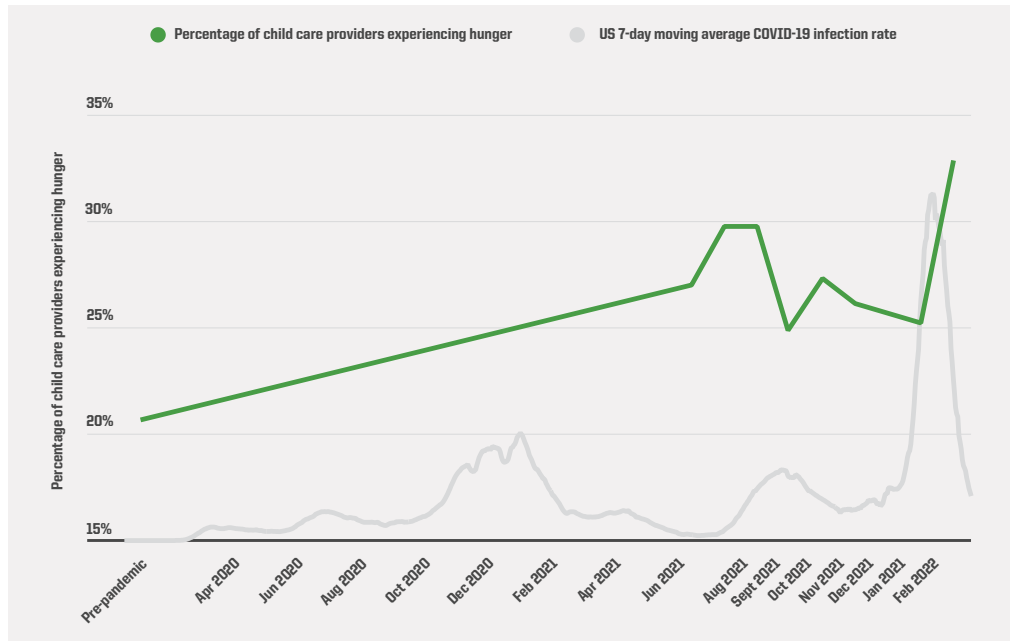
- In previous fact sheets, we highlighted challenges child care providers are facing, such as material hardship, work schedule uncertainty, and staff shortages. Among these challenges, we noted that child care providers are experiencing particularly concerning rates of hunger.
- In February 2022, **one in three child care providers reported experiences of hunger**. This is the highest rate we have observed since we began collecting these data from the workforce in 2021. This rate is even higher than the rate of hunger reported by families with young children during the same period (23%).

“Once housing and utilities are paid there isn’t a lot of money left for school expenses and groceries.”
Parent in South Carolina

“[My biggest concern is there is] not enough food, not enough money, [I] worry all the time.”
Center teacher in Oregon

“[My biggest concern is] trying to make ends meet and make sure we have enough food for our children.”
FFN in Pennsylvania

Trend of hunger among child care providers



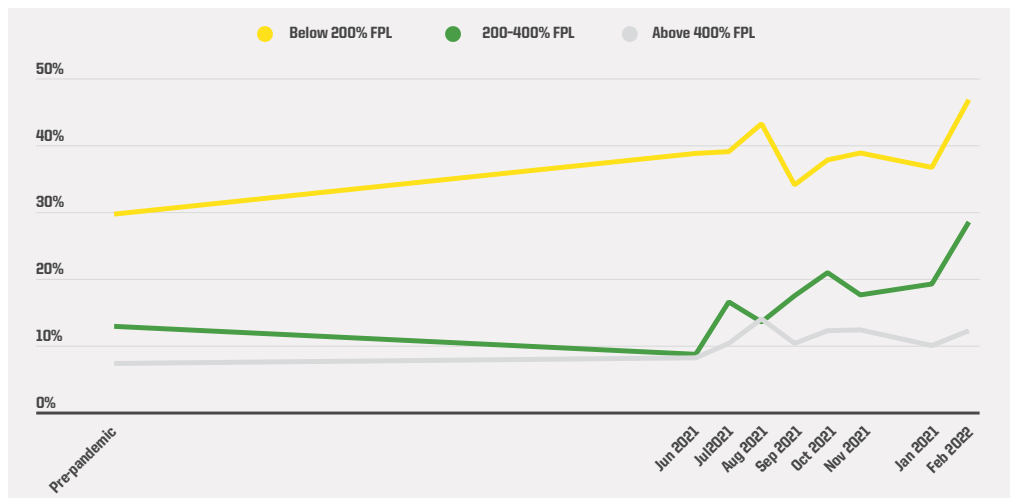
“Prices seem to be going up all the time. Our grocery bill is the one that I notice the most. It’s hard to feed a family good food, fresh food, today.”
Home-based provider in Nebraska

PROVIDERS AT DIFFERENT INCOME LEVELS REPORTED DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF HUNGER

Similar to the findings in our household survey, we found that lower-income child care providers (below 200% of the FPL) experienced the highest levels of hunger during the pandemic

(approximately 47%), compared to middle- (200%-400% of the FPL; 30%) and higher-income (above 400% of the FPL; 14%) providers.

Trend of hunger among child care providers, by income level



“I need to raise my rates to be able to afford to pay my bills and buy food for my family, but my daycare families can barely afford to pay me.”
Home-based provider in Kansas

“[My biggest concern is] the cost of food has almost doubled what I have paid in the past. There are shortages in all stores, much higher prices, and it seems to be getting worse and worse each week.”
Center teacher in Virginia

ABOUT THE RAPID PROJECT

Data presented in this fact sheet are based on both RAPID household and child care provider surveys.

For the household survey, analyses are based on responses collected from 5,082 caregivers between August 2020 and February 2022. These caregivers represent a range of voices: 5.83% are Black/African American, 14.13% are Latinx, and 35.50% live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Analyses of the child care provider data are based on survey responses collected from 1,549 providers from June 2021 to February 2022. These providers represent a range of voices: 8.33% are Black/African American, 10.35% are Latinx, and 48.16% live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Proportions/percentages are calculated based on the item-level response rates, not on the total sample. The data for these analyses are not weighted.

The RAPID project includes a survey of caregivers with children under age 6 and a survey of child care providers and other adults who care for children under age 6.

These surveys are designed to gather essential information continuously regarding the needs, health-promoting behaviors, and well-being of children and their families and important adults in their lives.

RAPID collects data monthly from 1,000 caregivers and child care providers in all 50 states. The surveys are national in scope, though not technically nationally representative. RAPID collects snapshots of data across time and can also assess trends longitudinally.

For more information about RAPID study design and methods, see [here](#).

RAPID is under the direction of Philip Fisher, PhD, based at the Stanford University Graduate School of Education

1,000+

**surveyed
bi-weekly**

93

surveys

17,000+

**unique
households**

50

US states

