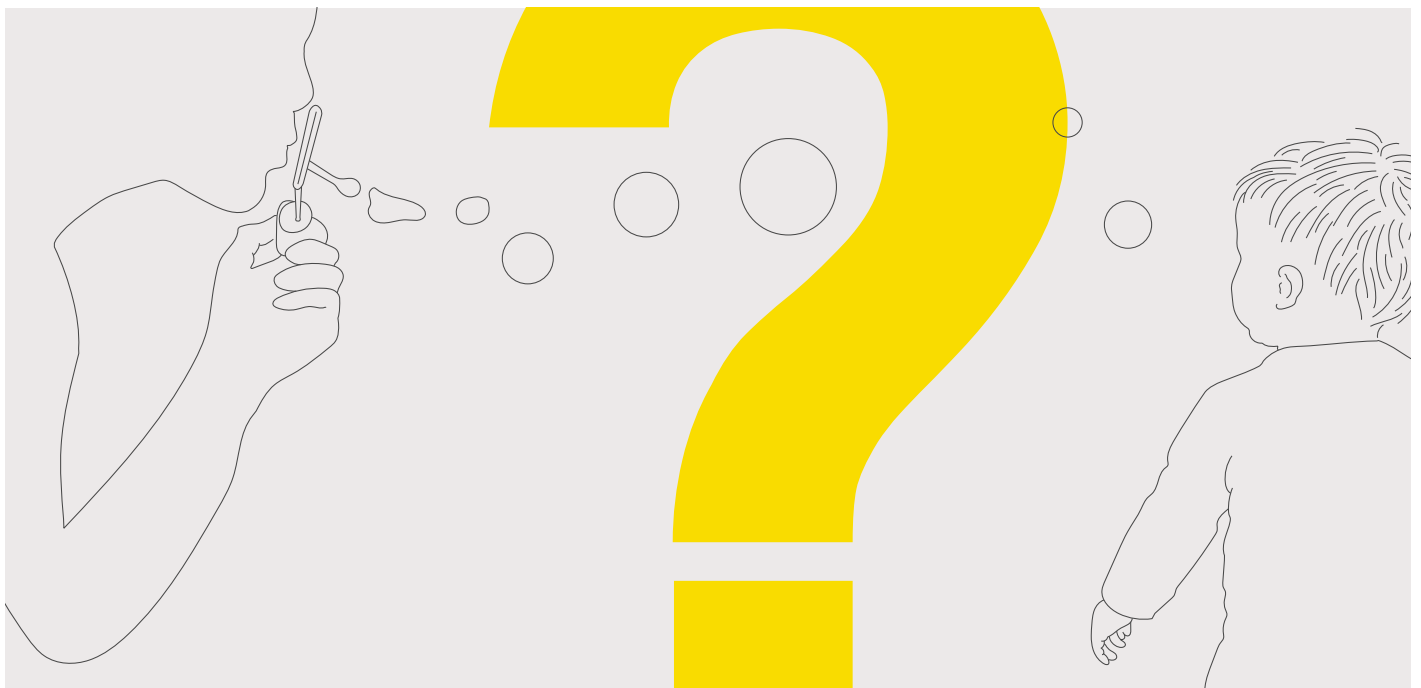


WHO IS PROVIDING FOR PROVIDERS? PART 3

Child care is a critical community resource that supports child development and learning, enables parents to work and go to school, and employs a diverse workforce of talented educators and caregivers. Reliable, high quality child care ensures that businesses and communities thrive. Yet in the U.S., those who provide this essential public service continue to receive low pay, insufficient benefits, and poor working conditions. Since March 2021, the RAPID Survey has gathered data from child care providers on a range of issues, including their experiences of material hardship, food insecurity, and housing challenges. Providers have identified themselves as child care center teachers, child care center directors, home-based providers, or family, friend and neighbor (FFN) providers.

In this fact sheet, we summarize ongoing trends in key domains associated with the well-being of those who provide child care to children in this country, which has direct effects on family stability and financial well-being, as well as serious implications for employers, and local, state, and national economies.



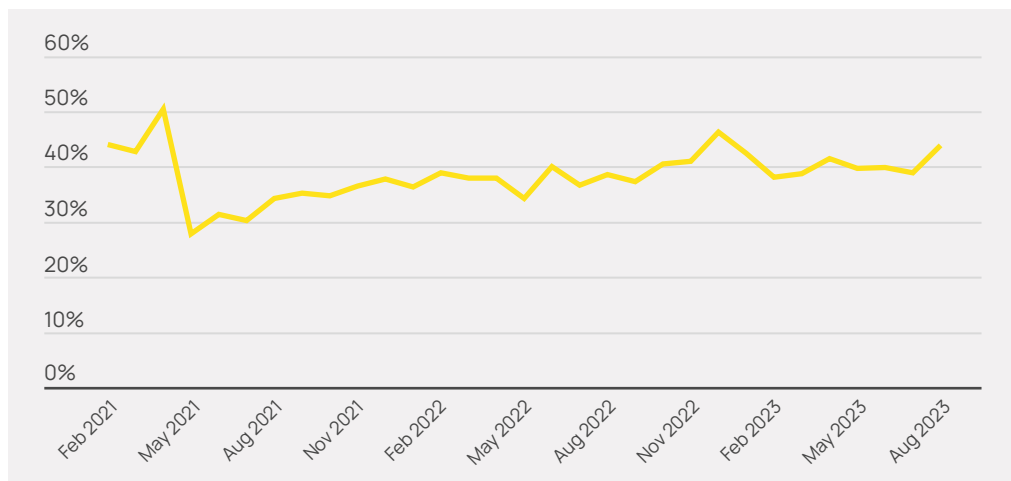
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MATERIAL HARDSHIP REMAINS HIGH AMONG PROVIDERS, AT 44%

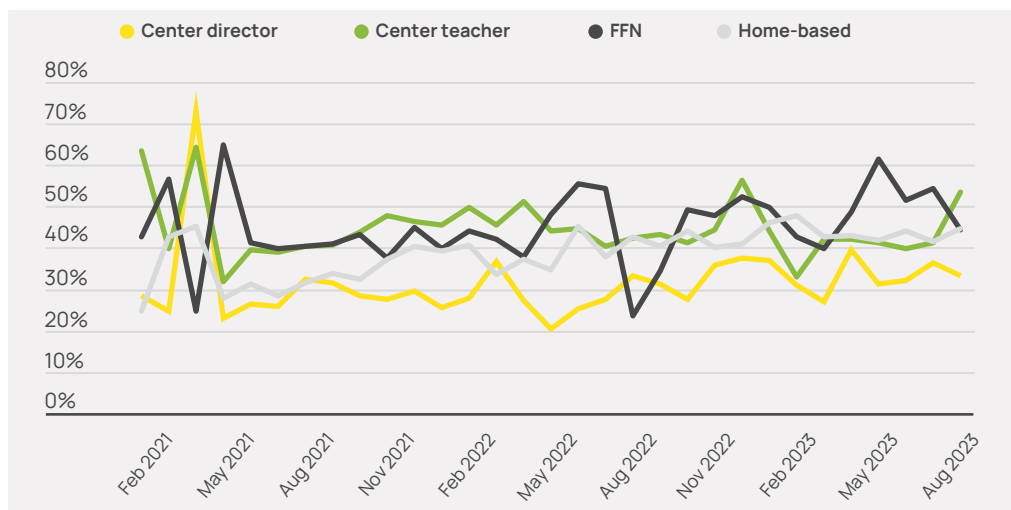
Rates of hardship peaked in April 2021 when half of the providers in the RAPID survey said they were facing a material hardship. Material hardship is defined as difficulty paying for basic needs in at least one of the following categories: food, housing, utilities, child care, healthcare, and well-being needs. While it has fluctuated to some degree, the rate has remained high since that time.

As of August 2023, 44% of providers surveyed reported experiencing at least one area of material hardship. We examined hardship by provider type and found that center teachers and FFN providers have consistently reported the highest levels of hardship, with an average of 45% of both provider groups reporting hardship overall from February 2021 through August 2023. FFN and center teachers tend to have the lowest incomes, which likely contributes to higher rates of material hardship.

Trend of child care providers' rate of material hardship, overall



Trend of child care providers' rate of material hardship, by provider type



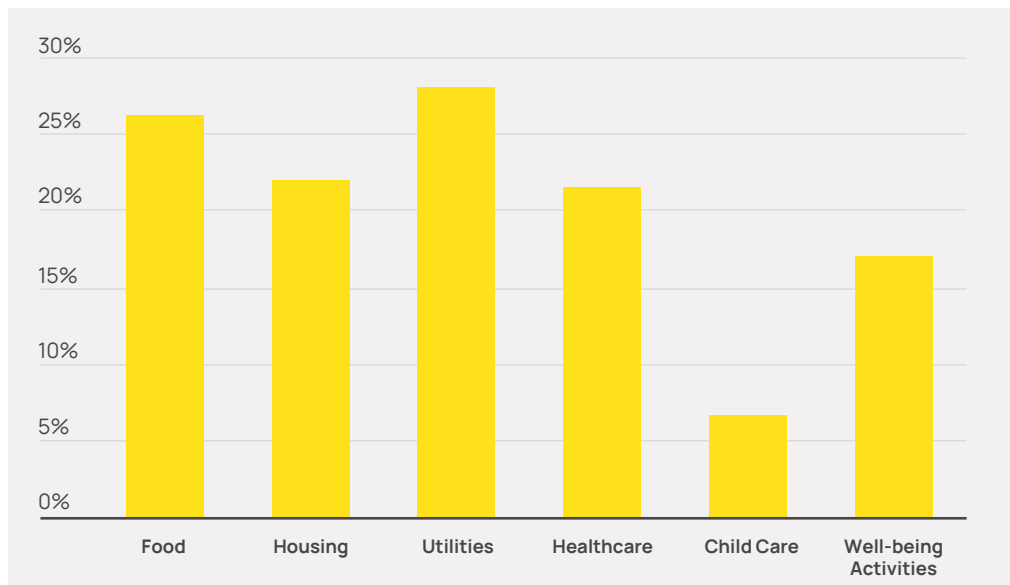
“With cost of goods rising and child care pay staying the same, it is getting harder to pay bills and buy necessities to live. I am by no means a big spender. I budget, coupon, look for sales, meal plan and use hand-me-downs. It is just discouraging when people at McDonald’s make more money.”

A center teacher from Wisconsin

Similarly, when we examined the specific areas of hardship, we found that in August 2023, more than one in four providers have reported difficulty paying for utilities (28%) and food (26%), and one in five reported having difficulty paying for healthcare (22%) and housing expenses (22%). These sustained high rates of material hardship are notable and troubling in and

of themselves. Yet, previous RAPID data also show that experiencing material hardship negatively affects child care providers' emotional well-being. As the number of areas in which providers' material hardship has increased, so has providers' emotional distress (a composite of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and stress symptoms).

Sources of material hardship among child care providers



FAMILY, FRIEND, AND NEIGHBOR (FFN) PROVIDERS MOST LIKELY TO REPORT FOOD INSECURITY

The RAPID Survey has also included more detailed questions about providers' experiences of hunger and food insecurity, such as skipping meals, not having enough money to purchase food, and not being able to afford balanced meals. In spring 2022, we reported that 1 in 3 providers were experiencing food insecurity. The rate

of providers experiencing food insecurity has remained high for the first half of 2023 – between 27% and 31%.

FFN providers and center teachers have consistently reported higher rates of food insecurity compared to home-based providers and center

“We definitely live paycheck to paycheck. We depleted our savings last year and didn’t get a big tax refund, so I’m a bit nervous, but I always figure something out. I do work multiple jobs, and help/volunteer when I can. [It is] VERY stressful.”

An FFN provider in Pennsylvania

“[My biggest challenge] is food prices going up and not qualifying for food assistance. We have a baby on the way and are trying to save up for her arrival, but it is very hard to do so with rising gas and food costs.”

An FFN provider in Pennsylvania

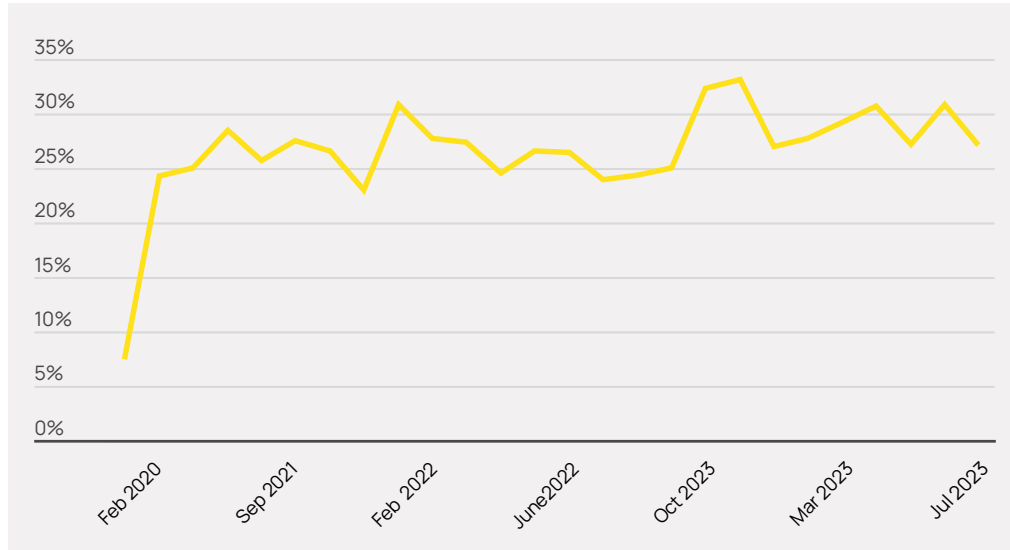
directors. FFN providers and center teachers tend to have the lowest incomes, which likely contributes to consistently higher rates of hunger among these types of providers. In particular, FFN providers'

hunger rose dramatically in the fall and winter of 2022. In July 2023, 53% of FFN providers surveyed reported experiencing food insecurity.

"We are having to put off rent to buy food."

An FFN provider in Mississippi

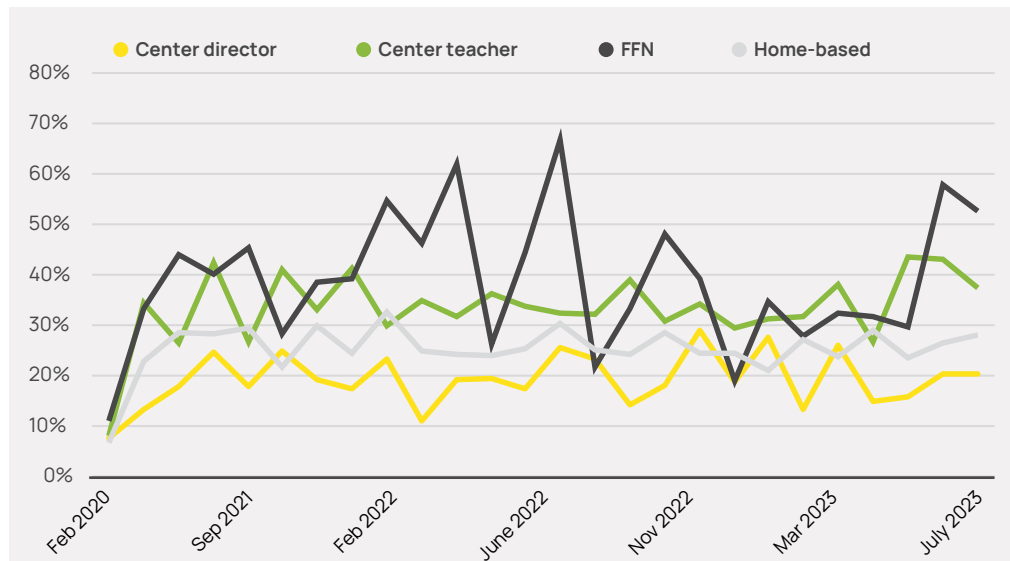
Trend of child care providers' experiences of hunger, overall



"I still worry about the price of certain items. My SNAP benefits have increased but the price of food has also increased."

An FFN provider in North Carolina

Trend of child care providers' experiences of hunger, by provider type



"In the last 6 months my mortgage insurance and taxes went up and raised my house payment \$83 per month along with higher prices on food, utilities, and just about everything else. Although I work in my home and these things are tax deductible, they still need to be paid now. It's never been more expensive to run my child care business. I have not raised rates yet because I know that my families are struggling too."

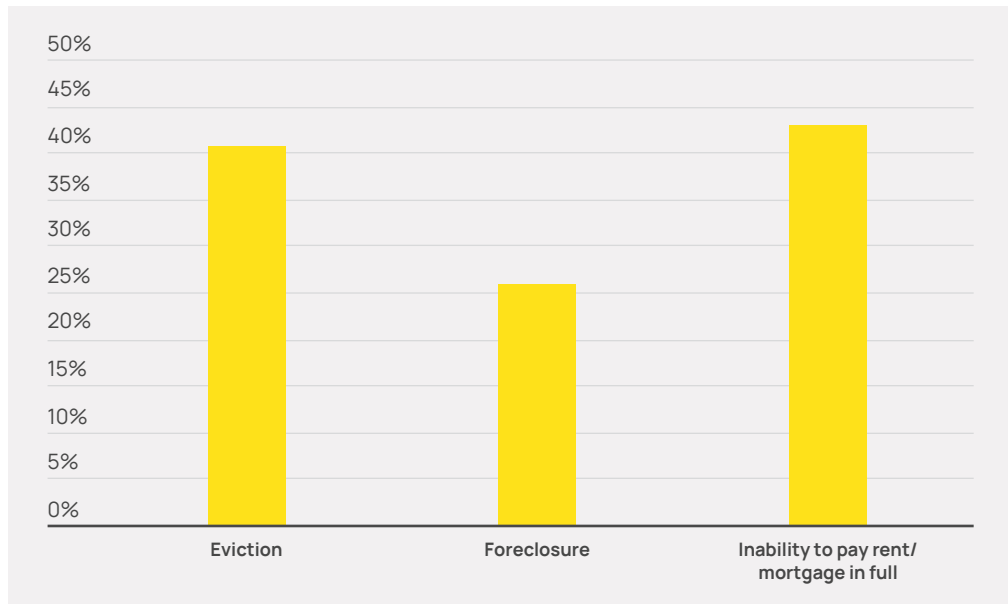
A home-based provider in Idaho

PROVIDERS ARE STILL WORRIED ABOUT EVICTION AND FORECLOSURE

Providers have also reported high levels of concern about housing affordability, eviction, and foreclosure. Between March 2020 and June 2023, about 43% of providers said they were worried about not being able to pay their rent or mortgage. Among providers who rent, 41% were worried about being evicted, and among those who own

their own homes, 26% said they worried about foreclosure, both of which represent increases from similar measures reported in spring 2022 (38% and 22% respectively). Child care center teachers were more likely to worry about eviction, foreclosure, and not being able to pay their rent/mortgage than other types of providers.

Providers' concerns about housing, overall



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Child care providers play a key role in the lives of children and families and in our economy and communities. More can be done to help the people doing this work thrive. RAPID previously reported that the lowest rate of housing hardship occurred when relief policies were in place, such as eviction moratoria and rental assistance, and the lowest food hardship for families also coincided with numerous federal programs and policies,

such as expanded SNAP and WIC benefits, and universal free school meals. This suggests that these types of benefits worked as intended to help those in economic distress. Affordable housing and supports that address barriers to homeownership (ex. debt relief, financial advising resources) would provide stability and strengthen the well-being of child care providers and the families and children they care for.

“Concerning my family, our biggest challenge is to be financially stable. The issue of getting evicted from our apartment is becoming so embarrassing.”
A center teacher in Kentucky

ABOUT THE RAPID PROJECT

RAPID is under the direction of Philip Fisher, PhD, Director of the Center on Early Childhood at Stanford University

Data presented in this fact sheet are based on RAPID provider surveys. Analyses are based on responses collected from 4,832 child care providers between February 2021 and August 2023. These providers represent a range of voices: 14.37% are Black/African American, 14.56% are Latinx, and 29.31% 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.

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 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](#).

3,200+

Providers

16,300+

Households

50

US States

