

Picking up the pieces: Building a better child care system post COVID-19 ^[1]

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Access full report online ^[2]

Excerpted from executive summary

For over 30 years, Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) has kept the nation informed and advocated for affordable, quality child care for all families. This year, in response to COVID-19, we focus our efforts on documenting the devastating impact of the pandemic on the child care system.

Picking Up the Pieces: Building a Better Child Care System Post COVID-19 combines our annual report, The U.S. and the High Price of Child Care and State Fact Sheets into one report, along with additional data gathered from Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and other sources as recently as July 2020. In addition, the report features information about CCAoA's new Child Care Data Center that includes child care data and stories for six pilot states: Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin.

When COVID-19 was layered onto the already fragile child care system, it shattered. Among the report's main findings on the pandemic's impact on child care:

- As of July 2020, 35% of child care centers and 21% of family child care programs remain closed nationwide.
- Child care attendance and enrollment remain significantly lower than they were at the start of 2020. Seventeen of 32 states that submitted data for July 2020 lost more than 25% of their child care capacity.
- The cost to provide quality child care is also likely to increase due to lower provider-child ratios and increased costs for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies. Quality may suffer as child care providers focus on ways to stay in business.
- Without significant public investment in our child care system, providers will likely have to pass along extra costs related to COVID-19 to parents who are already struggling to stay afloat during this economic downturn.

Picking Up the Pieces outlines three key components to build a better child care system after COVID-19:

1. **Public investment.** With the additional stresses the pandemic has put on an already fragile child care system, \$50 billion in dedicated funding is needed to stabilize the system. This significant funding level is necessary to support families as they return to school or the workforce, save thousands of child care jobs and businesses and ensure that we have a child care system to return to when COVID-19 subsides.
2. **A solid data foundation.** Data is fundamental to an equitable child care system, but it's extremely hard to get data from all states in a timely, standardized, systematic and efficient manner. CCAoA encourages the development of automated, interoperable systems with common standards to ensure that data collection, management, and dissemination is more efficient and functional for stakeholders.
3. **Resources and supports for families, children and child care providers.** Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) in nearly every state and other intermediaries are positioned to help families navigate complicated child care systems by providing consumer education products and referrals to affordable, quality child care programs. Over 75% of CCR&Rs have plans to help child care providers reopen, including providing information, helping providers secure PPE and cleaning supplies, and working to recruit child care providers to repopulate local supply.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: quality ^[4]

health and safety ^[5]

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