

Child care disruptions have been driving more women than men to quit their jobs ^[1]

The gap between women and men quitting is widest in states with the most COVID-related child care disruptions.

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EXCERPTS

Throughout the pandemic, women have been more likely than men to quit their jobs. That's still true, even as the omicron wave subsides.

That gap is widest in states that have had the most COVID-related disruptions to school and child care, according to a new analysis from the payroll processing company Gusto.

The gap between the number of women and men quitting their jobs during the pandemic has been persistent but not consistent.

"This gender gap ebbs and flows as these pandemic waves ebb and flow," said Luke Pardue, an economist at Gusto.

The gap was biggest last August when many schools didn't reopen right away. It narrowed in the fall, then widened again during the omicron wave — especially in the Northeast, Pardue said.

"Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, all were among the top states with child care disruptions in January of 2022. And they actually saw the widest gap between the rates at which women and men left work."

In states where there weren't many disruptions, men and women quit their jobs at about the same rate.

"When there are child care breakdowns, even before the pandemic, it was always women leaving the workforce more so than men," said Jeannina Perez, the early childhood national campaign director at the nonprofit MomsRising.

The fact that so many women are still quitting because of child care issues has big economic implications, she said.

"Women make up a huge percentage of our workforce," Perez said. "You want to deal with the labor shortage issue? Make sure folks can go to work."

By making sure, she added, that their kids have a place to go.

Region: United States ^[3]

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