

State Approaches to Address the Mississippi Early Childhood Education Workforce Crisis

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Why focus on child care amid competing priorities?

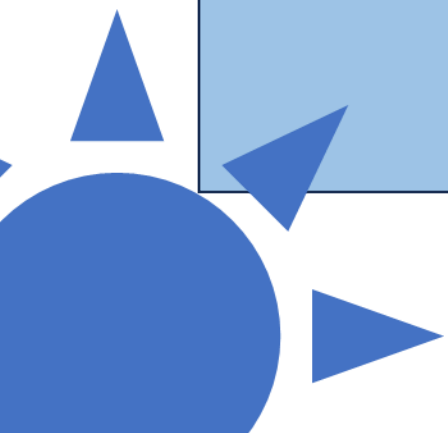
- To ensure the future workforce
 - High quality child care improves children's social, educational, and economic trajectories
 - Closes the achievement gap among children from different economic backgrounds; ROI 7:1
- To ensure the current workforce
 - Allows parents to work to support their families



Child Care Crisis: What are families facing in MS?

Cost of Child Care

- Findings from the 2024 Mississippi Child Care Market Rate Survey showed centers charging an average of **\$579/month**.
- For two children, that represents **26% of median household income**.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recommends that child care cost no more than **7% of a families' income** to be affordable.

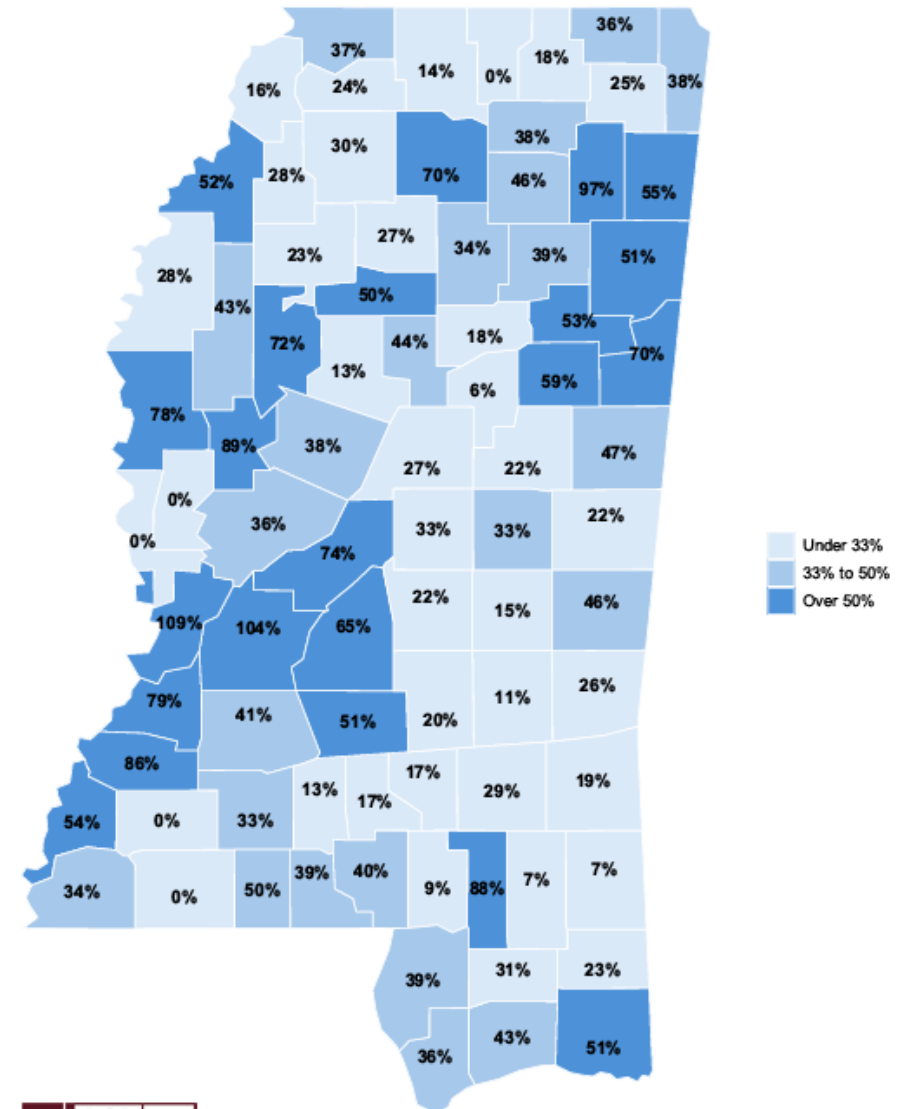


Child Care Availability

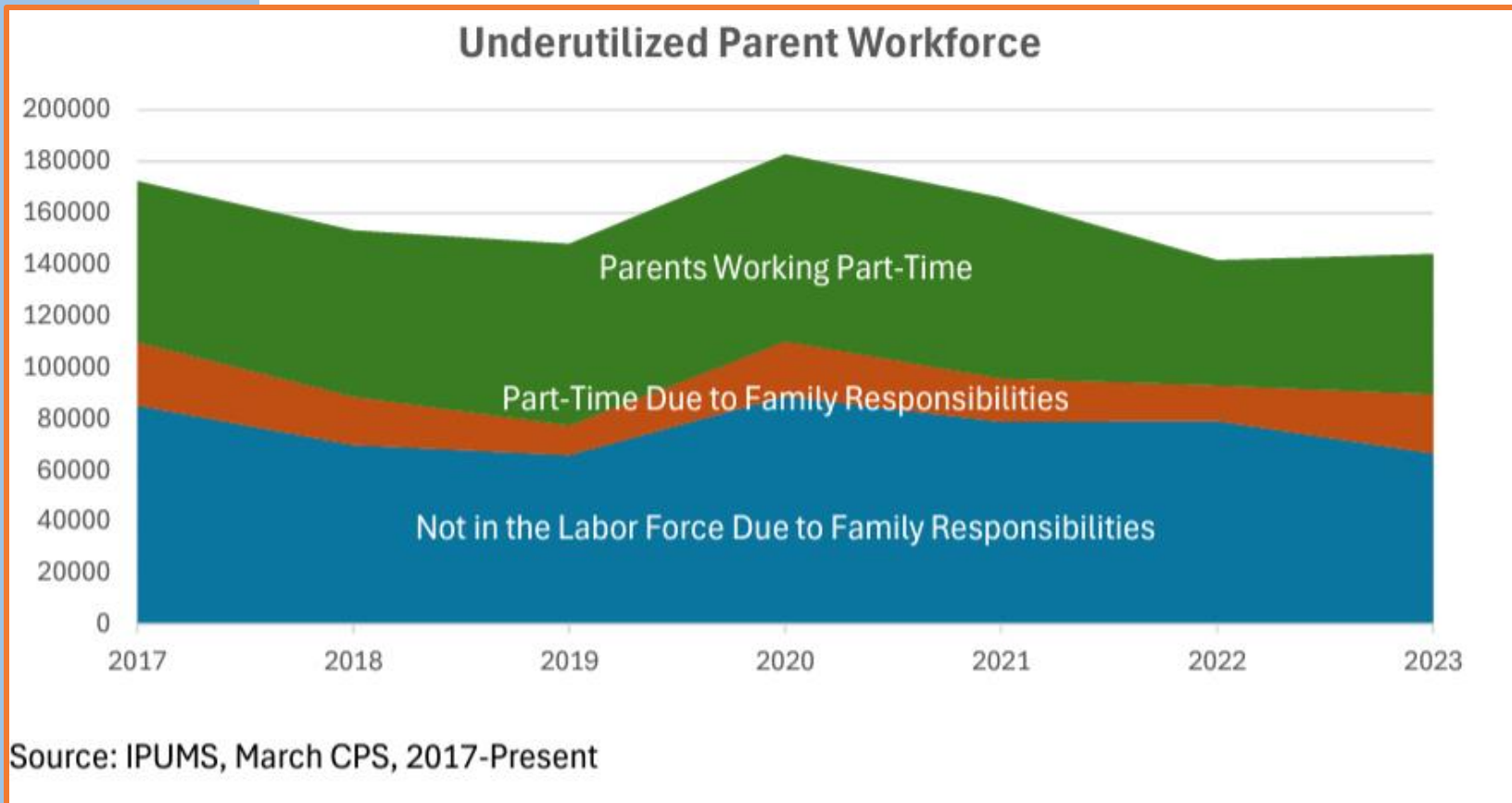
This map examines how many child care slots are available relative to the child population (ages 0 through 5) by Mississippi county.

- Areas with less than 33% capacity are considered “**child care deserts**,” meaning there are more than three children for every available child care slot.
- MS has 37 (45%) counties that are considered child care deserts.

Child Care Capacity as a Percent of Demand from Children Under 6 by County in 2023

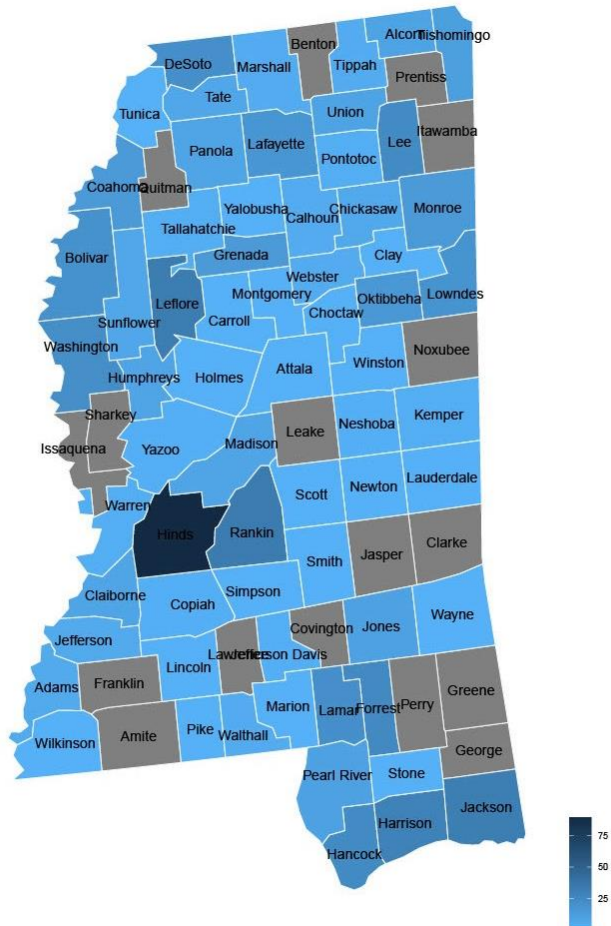
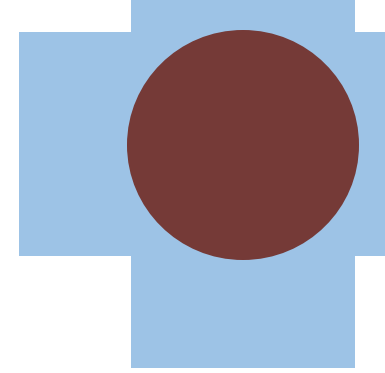


Child Care Availability



In 2023, Mississippi had almost 90,000 (12%) parents reporting that they are not working or are working part-time due to family responsibilities.

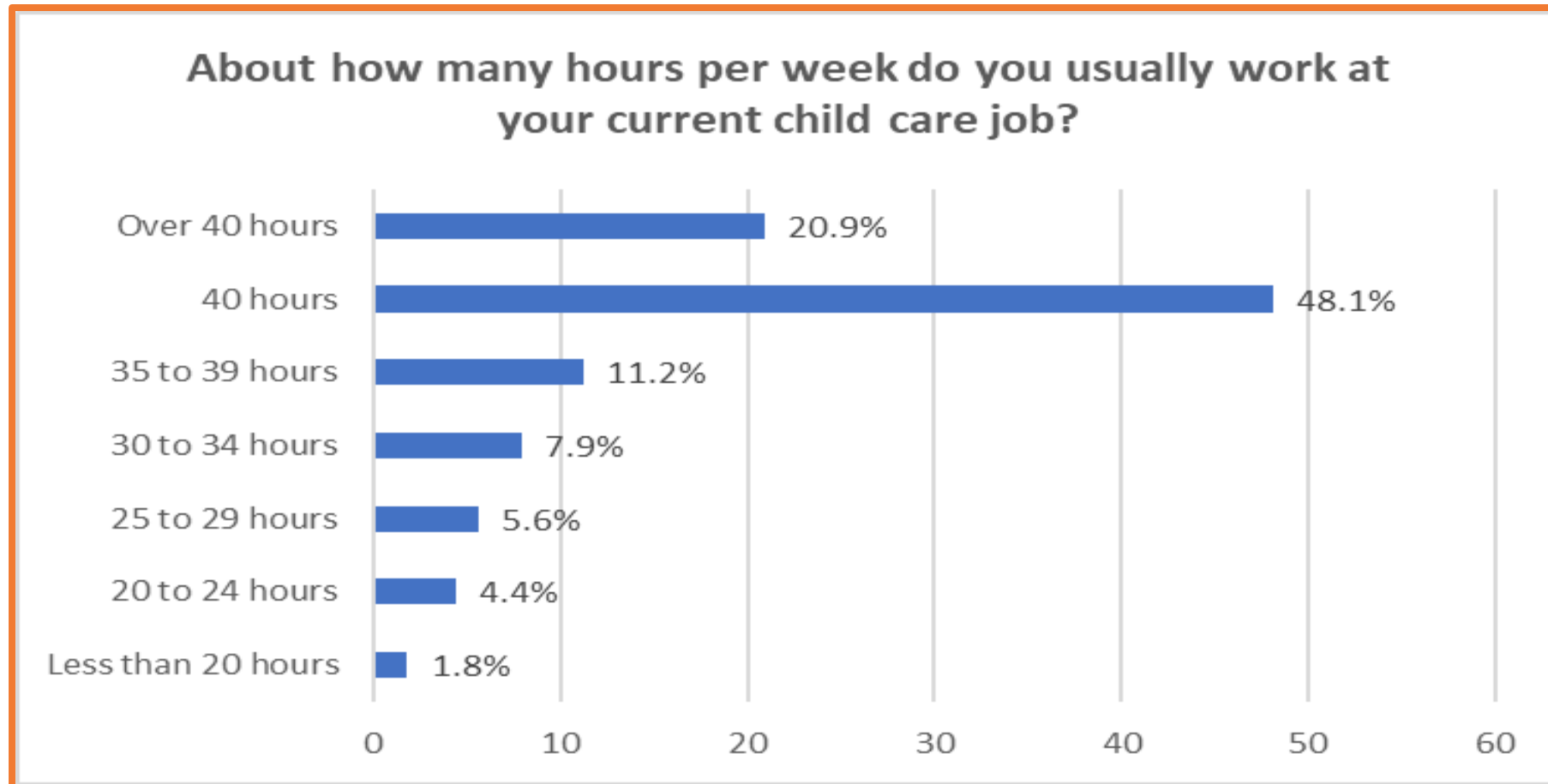
Why a shortage of child care?: Staffing



- Survey of child care teachers funded by W. K. Kellogg Foundation & administered July and August 2023
 - 661 fully completed responses
 - Child care teachers from 65 of Mississippi's 82 counties completed the survey
- Convenience Sample—Link and QR code sent to all licensed child care facilities & posted on organizational social media accounts across the state
 - MDHS currently implementing child care registry

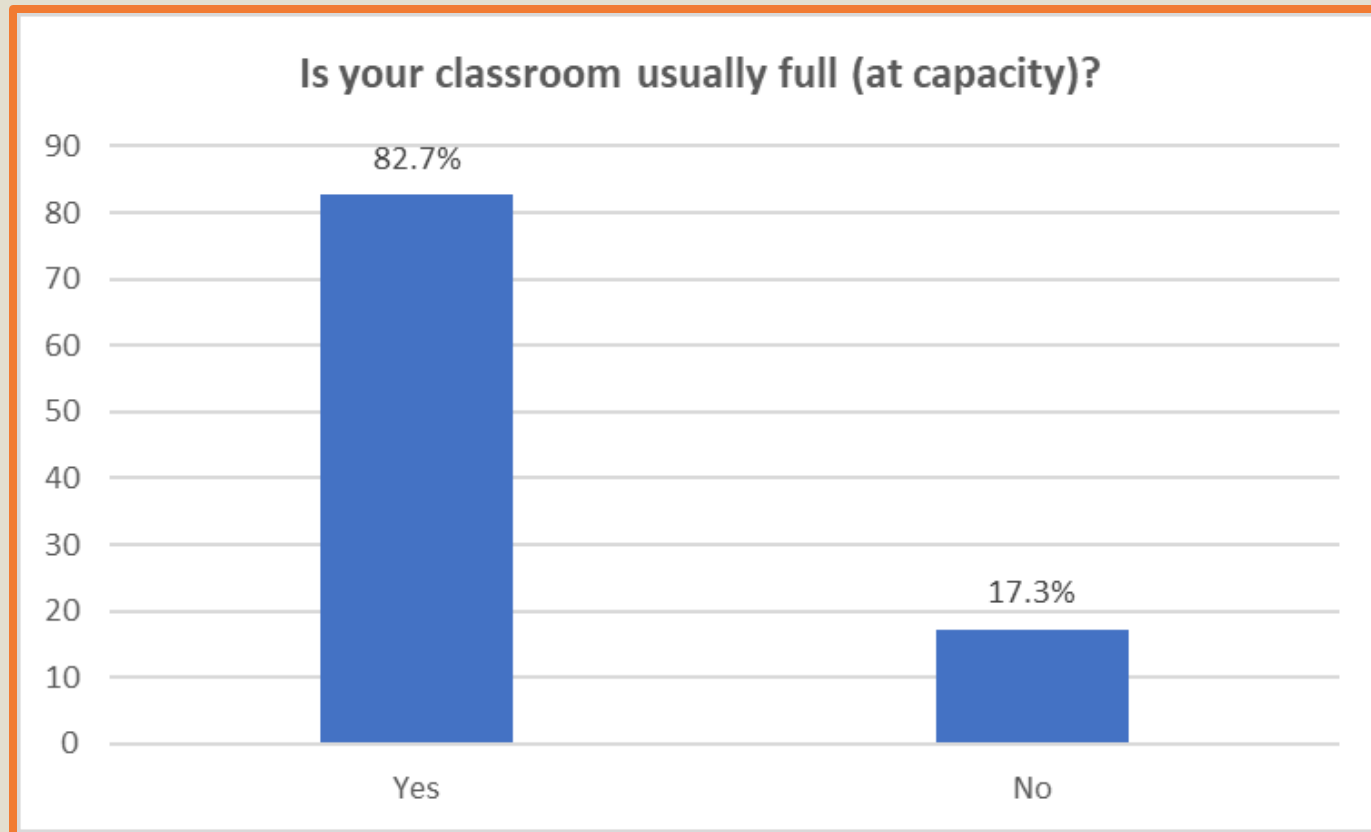
Mississippi early childhood educators

They work long hours.



Mississippi early childhood educators

Their classrooms are full.

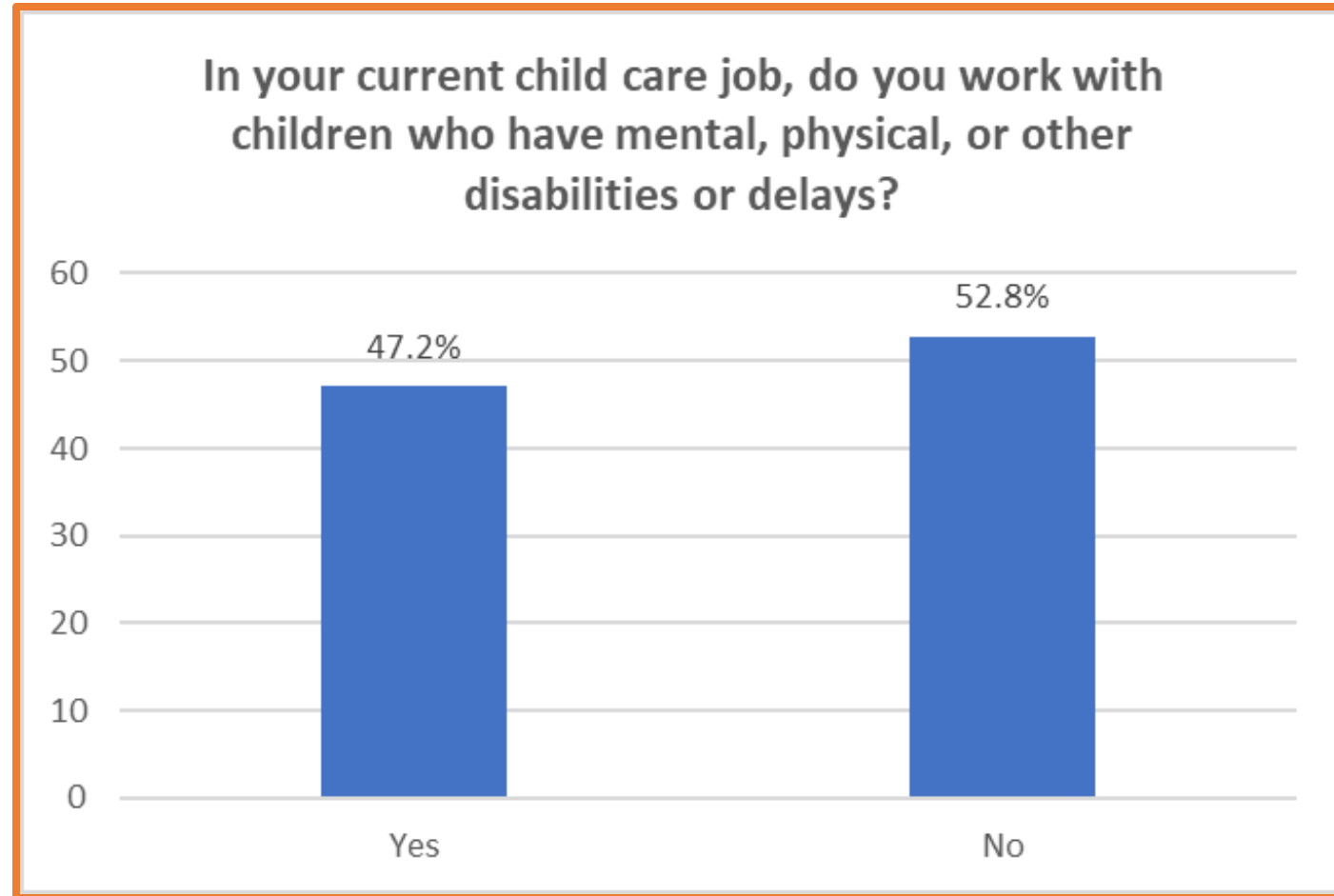


Most teachers (83%) answered that their classrooms are typically at capacity.

Mississippi early childhood educators

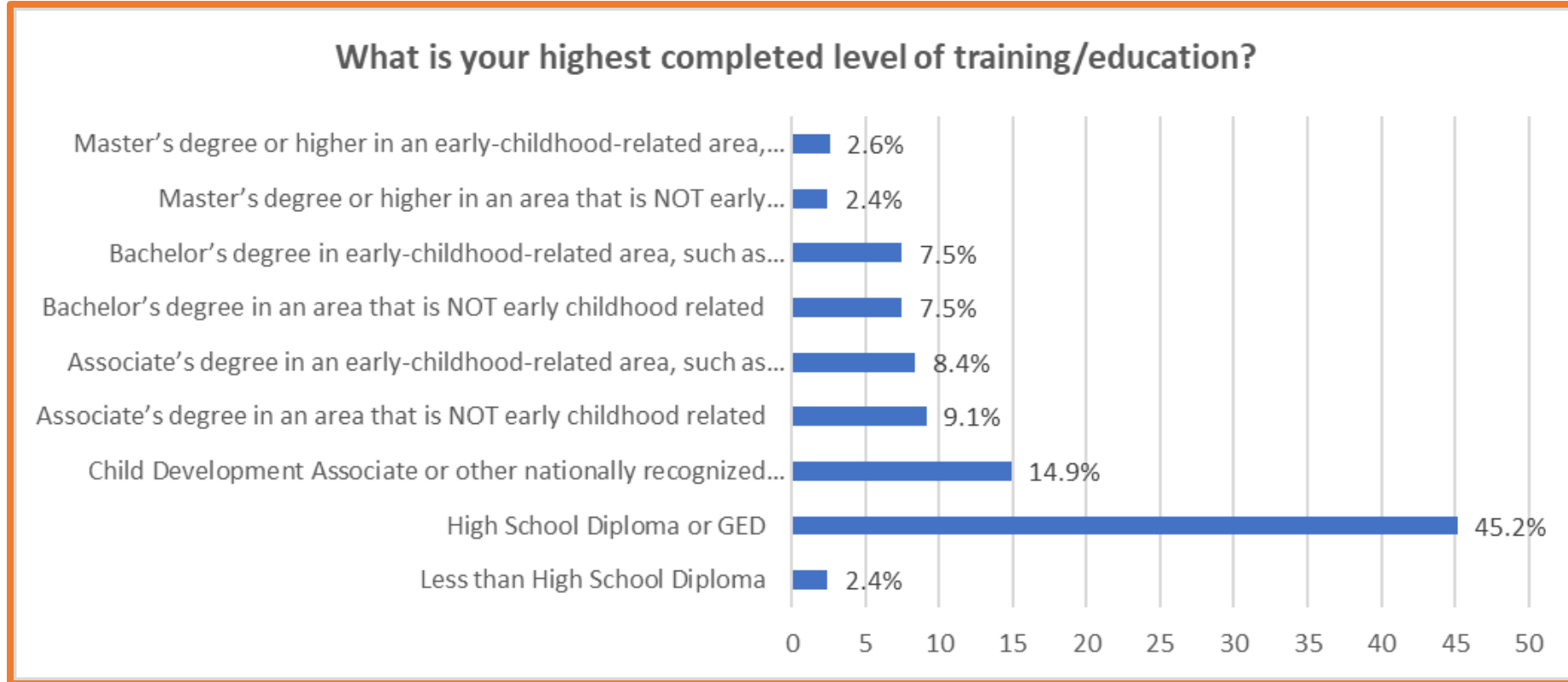
The work is challenging.

Almost half (47%) of teachers work with children with mental, physical, or other disabilities or delays.



Mississippi early childhood educators

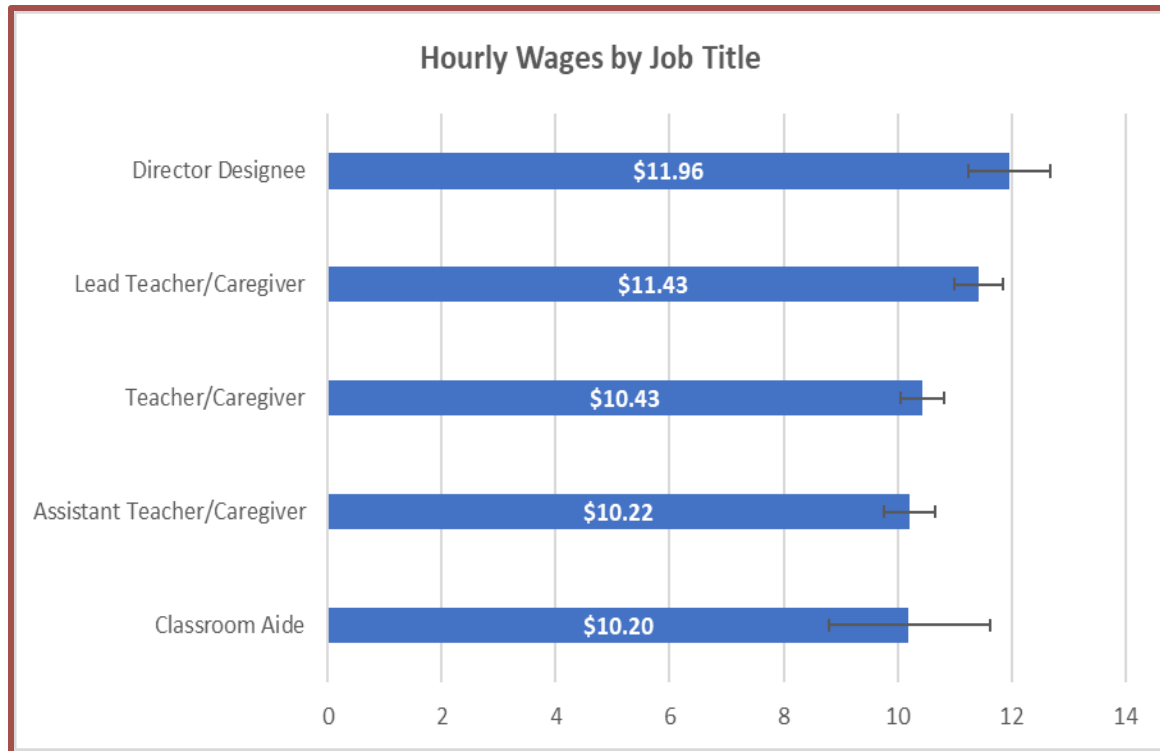
They have inadequate training for the demands they face.



48% had a high school diploma/GED or less.

Mississippi early childhood educators

They are paid less than survival wages.

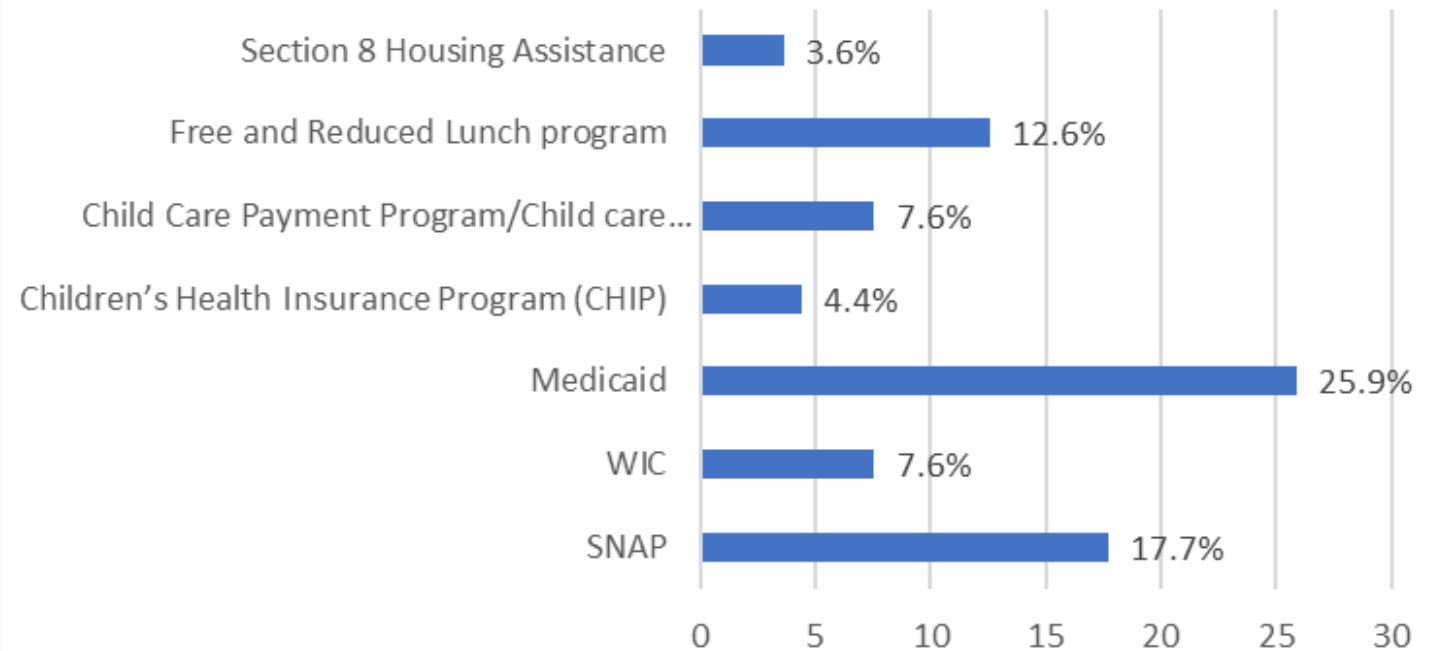


- On average, respondents earned \$10.93/hr.
 - The ALICE Report indicates that a survival wage in Mississippi is \$12.94/hr.
- Retail jobs requiring much less expertise pay \$15 on average in MS.
 - According to the Bureau of Labor statistics
- Nationally, 98% of all other jobs pay higher wages than early childhood education.
- Early childhood educators are almost 8x as likely to experience poverty than K-8 teachers.

Mississippi early childhood educators

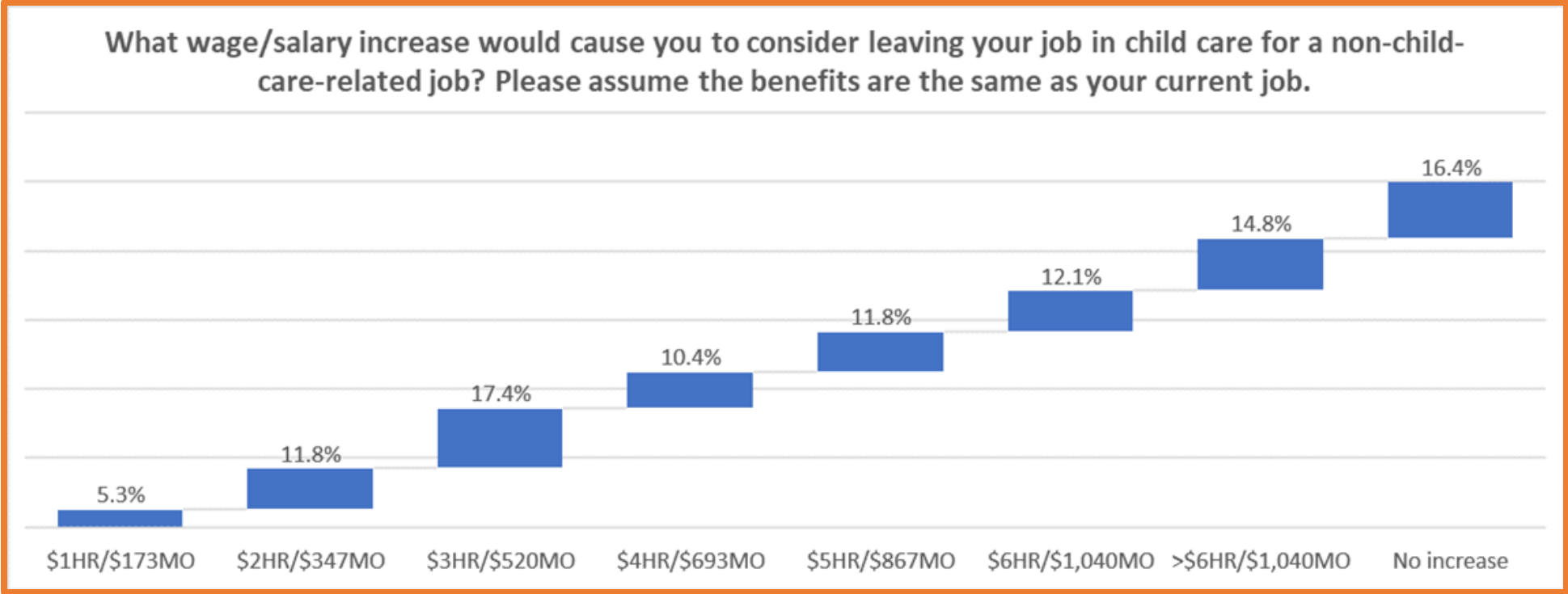
- At least 36% of all respondents receive one type of assistance program or more.

Does your household receive assistance from any of the following programs? (select all that apply)



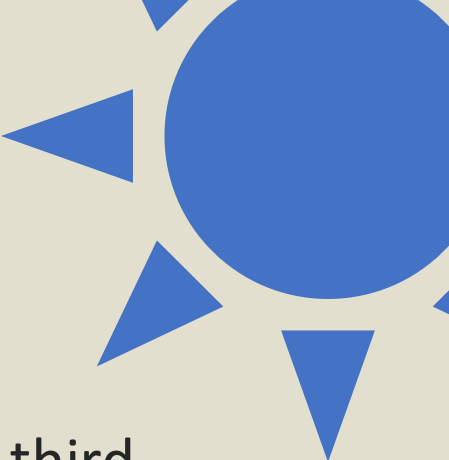
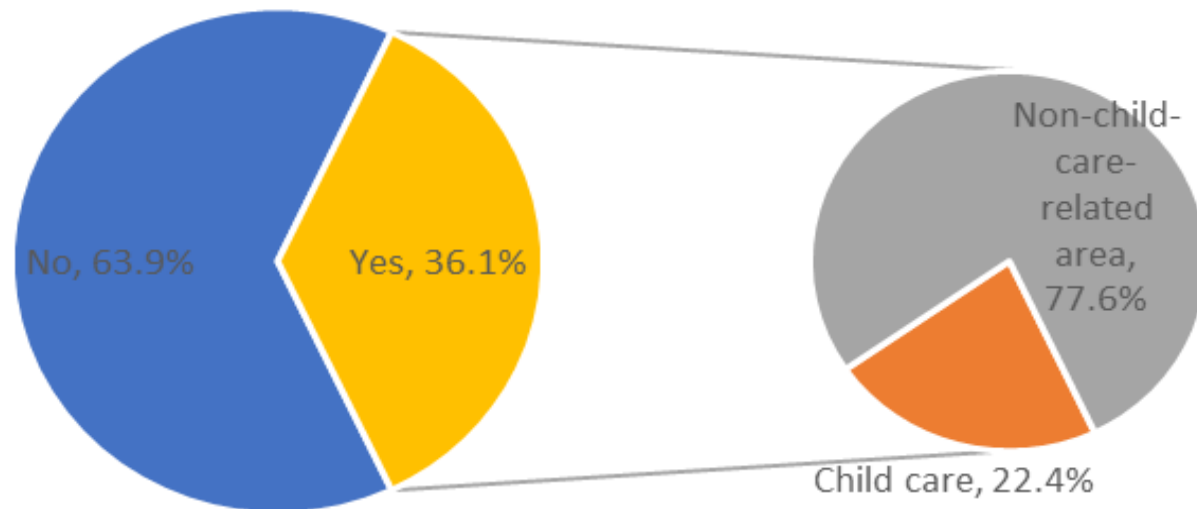
Early Childhood Education Workforce Stability

Assuming their benefits would be the same, a cumulative 57% of respondents said they would leave the child care field for an additional \$5.00 per hour.



Workforce Stability

In the past three months, have you looked for a new job? If yes, was it a job in child care or an area that is NOT child care related?



Over one-third (36%) of participants stated they had looked for a new job within the last three months of taking the survey.

Of those, 78% searched for non-child-care-related jobs.

Child Care Market Failure

Why it's a market failure:

- In a typical market, child care providers would just raise tuition to pay teachers more
- But parents cannot afford more, and the profit margins are too low for providers to absorb the additional costs



Child Care Market Failure

The estimated monthly cost of providing care in MS is over **\$1500/mo** for infants, though centers only charge, on average, **\$641/mo**.

And the child care subsidy rate to cover tuition costs for these children is over **\$900 short/mo**.

[Video](#)

Cost of Care Analysis, Metro Region

	Monthly Subsidy Rate, Metro	Monthly Cost Per Child, Licensing Current Salaries	↓ Gap	Monthly Cost Per Child, Licensing Living Wage Salaries	↓ Gap
infant	\$658	\$1,583	(\$925)	\$2,347	(\$1,689)
toddler	\$658	\$1,583	(\$925)	\$2,347	(\$1,689)
twos	\$628	\$1,305	(\$677)	\$1,910	(\$1,282)
preschool	\$585	\$1,097	(\$512)	\$1,582	(\$997)
school-age	\$563	\$533	\$30	\$747	(\$184)

Cost of Care Analysis, Non-Metro Region

	Monthly Subsidy Rate, Non-Metro	Monthly Cost Per Child, Licensing Current Salaries	↓ Gap	Monthly Cost Per Child, Licensing Living Wage Salaries	↓ Gap
infant	\$541	\$1,532	(\$990)	\$2,271	(\$1,730)
toddler	\$541	\$1,532	(\$990)	\$2,271	(\$1,730)
twos	\$520	\$1,265	(\$745)	\$1,850	(\$1,330)
preschool	\$520	\$1,065	(\$545)	\$1,534	(\$1,014)
school-age	\$476	\$519	(\$43)	\$726	(\$250)

Potential Solutions:

Use Child Care Development Fund Dollars



- Funding from the federal government to states to provide child care subsidies can be leveraged to increase child care provider resources
- Alabama provides quarterly bonus payments (\$3,000 for full-time and \$1,500 for part-time) to eligible child care staff through CCDBG funding. The bonuses are tied to qualifications such as length of employment.
- However, there is a tension between the number of children needing subsidies and the amount of the subsidies provided
- Mississippi is currently using 85% of its CCDF federal funding for direct services which is 15% over the required 70%, and still have more families need to be served
- Therefore, these funds have not been a potential source of revenue to address the child care crisis in MS

Potential solutions:

Allocate State Dollars Using Special Funds
or Tax Initiatives

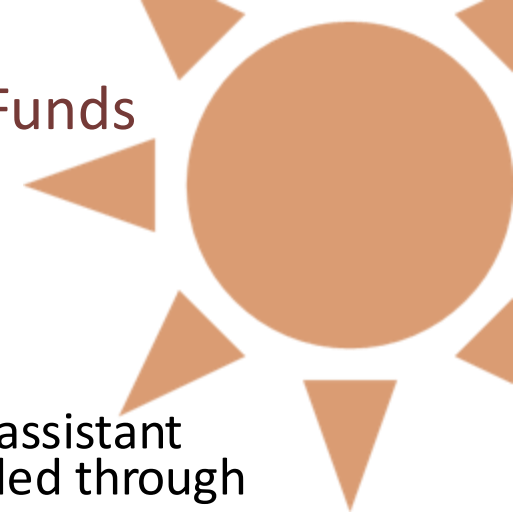


Over 30 states have found a way to pay for increased child care wages through state budgets:

- Maine-State efforts began as a continuation of American Rescue Plan funds, providing \$200 monthly to workers. Now Maine uses state general funds to fund a stipend based on early childhood educators' experience and education.
- Connecticut-Allocated in the 2023 state budget, the state of Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood distributed \$70 million in the form of a wage support grant as bonus payments to early childhood educators.
- New York-Invested \$343 million to continue state stabilization funds for child care providers, with 75% being used for workforce initiatives.
- Minnesota-Governor announced Great Start Compensation Support Program to support the child care industry and early educators.

Potential solutions:

Allocate State Dollars Using Special Funds or Tax Initiatives



Special Funds:

- Georgia's legislature included an increase in the base salary of state Pre-K lead and assistant teachers in its state fiscal year 2023 budget allocations. These increases will be funded through state lottery funds.
- Louisiana lawmakers passed a sports betting bill in June 2021. When sports betting starts generating money for the state, 25 percent of the revenue (up to \$20 million) will go to early learning programs for children.
- New Mexico-An amendment of the state constitution created a permanent fund for child care through the Land Grant Permanent Fund. This stream of permanent state funding for the child care sector will allow the state to address the wage crisis.

Tax Initiatives:

- TN-.B. 1907/H.B. 2517 would create a fund to provide a dollar-for dollar match to local governments to support infant and toddler care. The funds would be derived from a new 10 percent tax on car services (e.g., limousines, sedans, shuttles, and taxicabs).

Potential Solutions:

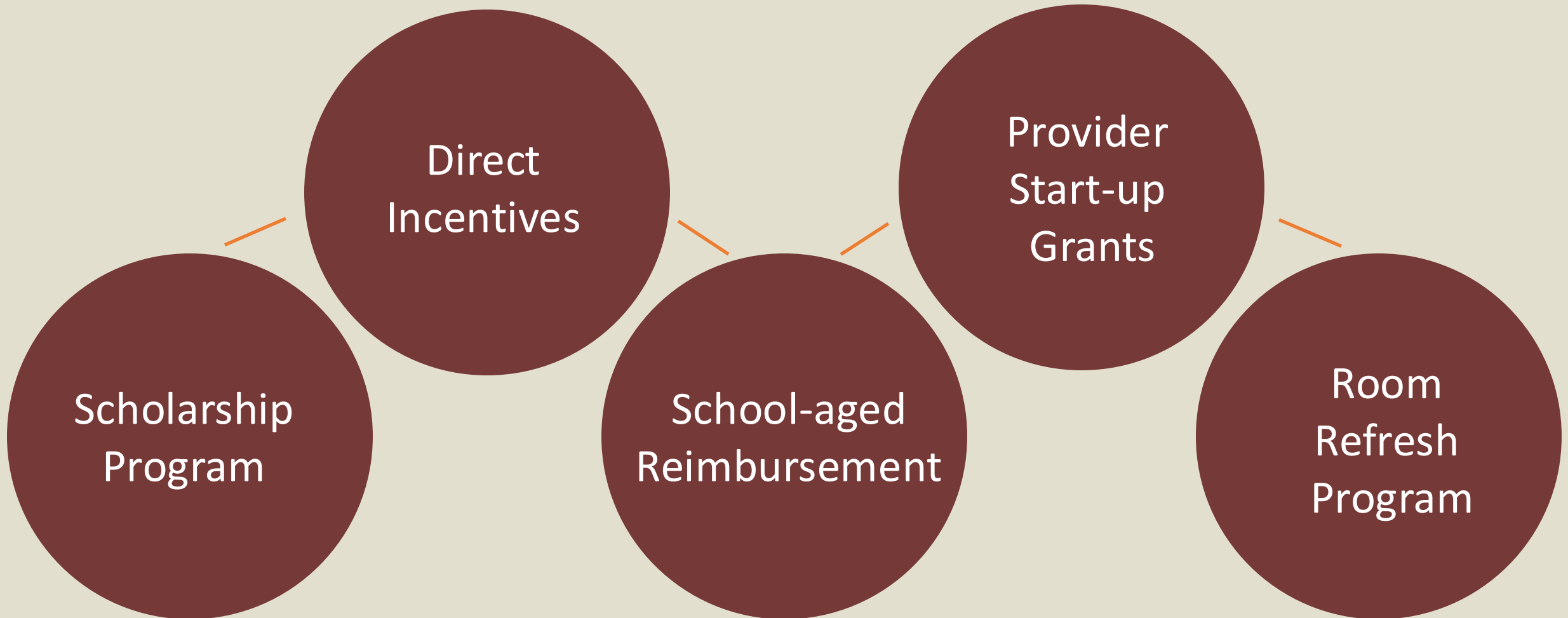
Use Time-limited American Rescue Plan and
Preschool Development Grant Dollars

- Many states, including Mississippi, using ARPA dollars to shore up the workforce in the wake of COVID
- However, these funds must be expended by the end of September 2024, creating a cliff
- Mississippi also using Preschool Development Grant dollars



MS Response: ARPA Dollars

Mississippi Early Child Care Development Initiative



MS Response: ARPA Dollars

MS Early Child Care Development Initiative: **Scholarship Program**

Total paid to date \$68,802

- Supports eligible individuals currently employed by a Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) provider as they pursue higher education in child development.
- Goal is to lessen the financial burden associated with earning either a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential or an Early Childhood Development Technology Associate degree.



MS Response: ARPA Dollars

MS Early Child Care Development Initiative: **Scholarship Program**

- CDA New: 512 Applicants are pursuing their first or a new CDA Credential through MDHS ECCDI
 - 473 have received access to CDA specific training (39 had previous training)
 - 98 have completed the training
- CDA Renewal: 12 Applicants are renewing their CDA Credential
- Associate Degree: 14 Applicants are receiving \$1,500 for their Associate Degree which is concentrated on Early Childhood Development from various Mississippi Community Colleges



MS Response: ARPA Dollars



MS Early Child Care Development Initiative: **Direct Incentives** –
Total paid to date \$37,923,371

- This program rewards teachers at a CCPP-participating facility with monthly incentives.
- Its aim is to recognizing and rewarding the hard work and dedication of individual teachers within Child Care Payment Program (CCPP) participating childcare programs.
- To qualify, teachers must stay employed at a CCPP-participating provider during the program and commit to childcare work for a year after program funding ends.
- Total Applicants Approved: 6,650

MS Response: ARPA Dollars

MS Early Child Care Development Initiative: **School-Aged Reimbursement**

Total paid to date - \$10,160,680

- This program supports CCPP-participating childcare providers who cared for school-age children full-time during pandemic-related school closures.
- Goal is to support childcare providers who extended full-time care to school-aged children during pandemic-related closures and similar periods when the providers were only paid part-time rates.
- To qualify you must be an active CCPP provider who offered full-time care to eligible children during school closures or similar periods.
- 1103 Applications Created
- 236 Submitted
- 551 Approved



MS Response: ARPA Dollars

MS Early Child Care Development Initiative:

Provider Start-up Grants Total paid to date - \$0

- 10 Applicants currently
 - 4 approved
 - 1 in-home and 3 centers
 - Total amount to pay is \$82,165
- The first recipient received their grant in June and several more were approved last week. MDHS/DECCD has budgeted for 150 programs to receive the start up grant, and it is our hope that all who are eligible receive it.



MS Response: ARPA Dollars

MS Early Child Care Development Initiative: **Room Refresh Program**

Total paid to date - \$0

- This program helps CCPP participating providers upgrade classroom equipment, furniture, and/or supplies.
- Aim is to allow existing MS Child Care Payment Providers (CCPP) to “spruce up” the facility.

Providers will place a one-time order with the vendor, Lakeshore .

The predetermined award amount will be based upon the licensed capacity size for each provider.

Applied: 682

Approved: 545

Shipped: 311

Total Dollar Amount of Shipped Orders: ~\$2,500,000

Tier	Capacity Range	Award
1	1 to 10	\$ 2,000
2	11 to 20	\$ 3,000
3	21 to 30	\$ 4,000
4	31 to 40	\$ 5,000
5	41 to 50	\$ 6,000
6	51 to 60	\$ 7,000
7	61 to 70	\$ 8,000
8	71 to 80	\$ 9,000
9	81 to 90	\$ 10,000
10	91 to 100	\$ 11,000
11	101+	\$ 12,000

MS Response: PDG Dollars

Collaboration among 5 Organizations:

- Mississippi Department of Human Services' Division of Early Childhood Care and Development
- Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Early Childhood
- Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University
- Children's Foundation of Mississippi
- Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center at the University of Southern MS



MS Response: PDG Dollars

Professional Development Resources

- MDE: Conferences, Online Training, In-person coaching
- Mississippi Child Care Quality Support System:

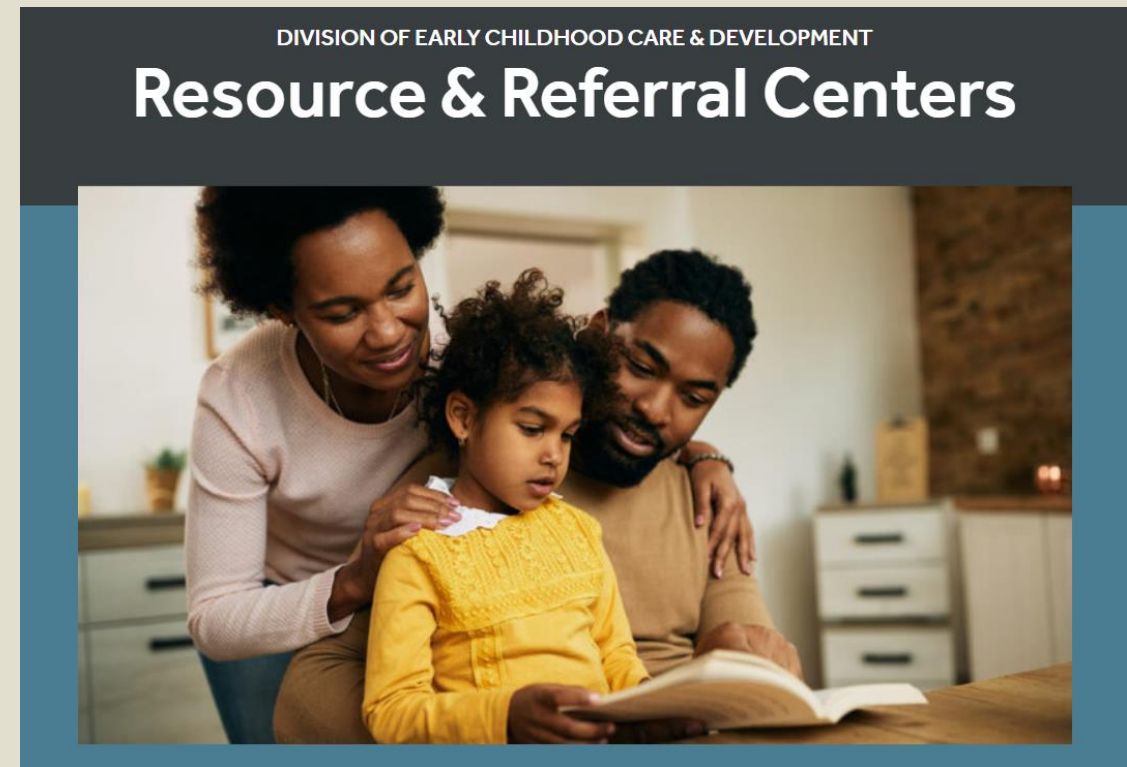


MS Response: PDG Dollars

15 Resource & Referral Centers (R&Rs) across the state help parents find childcare and help Child Care Providers by providing training and resources to the providers at no cost.

The services provided from R&Rs are:

- Lending libraries that allow families and providers to access age-appropriate learning materials families.
- Helping families and caregivers in identifying high quality services.
- Providing developmental screenings to children ages 0-5.
- Offering assistance and professional development to child care providers.



Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC)

- The overarching goal of the Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC) is to meet the needs of early childhood educators, families, and young children with disabilities by providing high quality early childhood inclusion.
- To promote early childhood inclusion (ECI), it is important for the early childhood workforce to have access to high quality professional development opportunities.



Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC)

- MECIC offers 4 credential programs focused on Early Childhood Inclusion and Social and Emotional Development.
- Additional workforce support includes positive behavior intervention supports for early childhood through the implementation of Pyramid Model and high-quality comprehensive coaching.



Contact:

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