

Child care is essential – for working families, children’s healthy development, and North Carolina’s economic future

Child care programs need support to survive the COVID-19 crisis and keep children safe



“Since the second phase of the state reopening the daycares to all children, we find ourselves with 3 toddlers and 3 preschoolers, and the same amount of staff still on payroll. I myself cannot effectively run a business with this small number of enrolled children, but I also do not want to lay off any staff when jobs are scarce and morale is low and answers are just not available. Is there relief in sight?” – Jackie Williams, Mallard Creek Learning Center, Charlotte

“Financial support is needed during this pandemic. Child care providers are essential to getting through this time. First responders need to be at ease knowing their children are safe and well taken care of. We need to hire additional staff whose sole job is to clean and disinfect the centers and toys. We need to be able to adequately compensate each staff member who is taking a risk themselves to provide care for essential staff’s children.” Daisy Brooks, Daisy’s Good Beginnings, Tabor City

“We need support. If I am forced to close without funding, I will not be able to reopen” – Vanessa Hodges, The Learning Center, Washington

“With this virus coming on so sudden, the impact is hitting us in ways we couldn’t have imagined. Trying to keep our staff at work and meeting payroll will definitely take its toll to where we may not be able to recover, and we can’t wait long to get some help just to remain open. The struggle is real and we need help now.” – Jerry Burchett, Kid City Children Center, Thomasville

“Our center has gone from 180 children to around 70. My staff have all worked here for 7-20 years and I am desperately trying to keep them employed. I have worked very hard over the years to get them full benefits and good pay. It breaks my heart to see their jobs almost gone. Without help, we will have to close in a few short weeks. We are needed now for our essential working parents and will be very needed again for all of our parents. I am anxious, weary and worried trying to keep staff and children safe and my staff paid.” – Carolyn Breedlove, First Baptist Welcome Learning Center, Welcome

“I’m currently open and I have spent an overwhelming amount on disinfectants, gloves, ear probes, laser thermometers, and other supplies. I have no more masks due to the shortage. Funding is needed because SAFETY is the greatest need. Please help.” Kimberly McAllister, Pamper, Hugs & Luv’s Learning Center, Hope Mills

“We are in desperate need of instant financial assistance or we will have to close our doors – which means we will not be available to continue to provide care for essential workers children. Nor will we be available to assist when the pandemic ends and the economy works to get back on its feet.” – Rosaline Gordon, Steps to Hope Academy, Hendersonville

“As essential workers, we are supporting our families who are also essential workers, so that they can continue to work in the health field or maintain this economy through other critical services. Our costs have increased, access to supplies needed has been reduced, and we want to keep our teachers working or ensure their families will be taken care of through this process, if unemployed. When the pandemic is over, we want to be able to keep our doors open to those families who have been safe at home, who need care but could not afford to pay tuition to keep our doors open. We will need help to survive, as we have helped others stay safe from COVID-19.” – Anna Mercer-McClean, Community School for People Under 6, Carrboro

“There is a possibility of losing my center, which I have put heart and soul into. I had to close my doors and hope to be able to reopen when this crisis subsides. We need your help.” Eric Moore, Kid’s Learning Center, Durham

“Our families and our staff are scared right now; they don't trust that they will be taken care of, they are worried about feeding their families, they are worried about having money to pay bills in upcoming months, they are worried that they will ultimately lose their jobs (many have already). Due to COVID-19 and our declining enrollment we had to lay off 25% of our staff. If we don't invest in early education now, what is it going to look like in 20 years? I'm scared, I'm honestly scared.” – Donna Sand, COSKids, Matthews

“I am 48 years old, immunocompromised, and have asthma. I am putting myself at risk staying open for my parents that are essential workers. I've had a hard time finding toilet paper, cleaning supplies and certain foods I need to operate and to keep myself, my family, and these children and their families safe. I have had to pay more for supplies, on top of the loss of income from the children that aren't coming. Please consider helping us that are helping others.” – Tonya Rockhold, Tonya's Tots, King

“Our programs are suffering major losses during COVID-19. Supplies are limited and we are losing families. We still have to pay our bills.”
– Cassandra Gullick, Gullick's Learning Room, Winston-Salem

“Due to COVID - 19, our attendance has been way down. I have had to cut many employee hours. Please help us during this time of difficulty. We want to continue to provide care for our children in the center.” – Debra Kretschmer, Wilson's Mills Baptist Child Care, Smithfield

“It's sad that it has taken a pandemic for people to realize how crucial the child care industry is to the economy and the people of this great state! Please do what is right and support child care and others like us in the same economic trouble.” Robyn Willis, The Pa-Paw Patch, Vale

“I am afraid if I don't get help soon, I can't afford to stay open. We need the jobs and the parents need us. We should be just as important as others working during this crisis.” – Annie Pettaway, Little Mark Child Care Center, Bethel

“We have teachers and parents that are withdrawing their children and keeping them at home even though we have elected at this time to remain open. Thankfully we have been able to replace 4 of our 12 enrolled with essential workers looking for temporary child care. However, if more parents remove their children we will face substantial loss and might not be able to continue our career of 29 years. Please remember to look out for small businesses such as child care. It is important for quality care to be available once this crisis is over.” – Debbie Powell, Home Touch Child Care, Charlotte

“We are really stressed about how we will continue to operate due to funding. We are open and praying that we can keep serving children during this time.” – Katherine Davis, The Growing Place Child Care, Asheboro

“Child care centers such as ours have been impacted by lack of student attendance. None of our students are attending. We have no income to pay our bills or employees. Please do what you can to help us.” – Susan Williams, Learning & Fun Preschool, Boone

“We have had to cut back hours due to lack of kids. We've had to temporarily cut staff and it's been a struggle. We need help to stay afloat so we can help support the families that are still working during this time.” – Kadie Campbell, South Rowan Academy Daycare, China Grove

“In order for me to continue to provide services for essential workers, more funding is needed now.” – Teresa Kearney, Teresa's Tree of Knowledge, Henderson

“Child care centers are struggling all over the state. The ones of us that chose to stay open are doing everything we can to help our frontline workers not to have to worry about their children and be able to focus on their patients.” – Joyce Isenhour, Little Friends Child Development Center, Albemarle

“I have lost a lot of children and I am struggling to pay my staff. Prior to this pandemic I had a full center and a waiting list. Child care is essential to families, children, and the economy.” – Sheha, Child Care Provider, Goldsboro



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We have been open and serving our community for 23 years. We have so many parents out of work. I am afraid we will not survive and have to shut our doors forever. I do not want to lose my staff, most of them have been with us for 10-15 years.

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Denise Marshall
Little Ivy League
Child Care Center in Dunn

“My experience with the pandemic has been very overwhelming, from not being able to find the much-needed supplies for sanitizing and disinfecting, to a shortage of food. My biggest fear has been remaining open through this trying time to allow essential workers to fill the gaps where they are needed and protecting my family while doing my part as an essential worker too.” – Pamela Swain, Pam’s House of Joy, Murfreesboro

“We weren’t sure if we should stay open or close but decided to remain open and take one day at a time. We quickly went from 36 children to around 7 children who were attending. Parents began to panic and decided to keep their children home. We really struggle but are slowly having our children return. The grant, bonuses and subsidy payments helped some but COVID-19 still puts a burden on the daycare. It has been very stressful as a director to make sure I was making the right decisions – trying to do what was right for the teachers, children and parents – since everyday it seemed something would change.” – Donna Critcher, New Beginnings Child Care, Gatesville



“We have not opened back up as of now. Having no tuition coming in it was incredibly scary to think about covering costs of upkeep while closed, rent, and costs to try to reopen. I have explored opening a few times but each time our reduced children count just won’t work with families still unsure of what they are comfortable with. It’s been so difficult to sit down and add up the things that are needed and the regular maintenance that has gone undone. I am not sure how to do it without a supply chain for supplies to stay healthy and safe. I can’t tell you how many times I wanted to throw in the towel and walk away, but I truly love my job. I want to make a difference here and I employ 16 people.” – Lynn Jones-Hoats, Healthy Environments Child Development Center, Kill Devil Hills

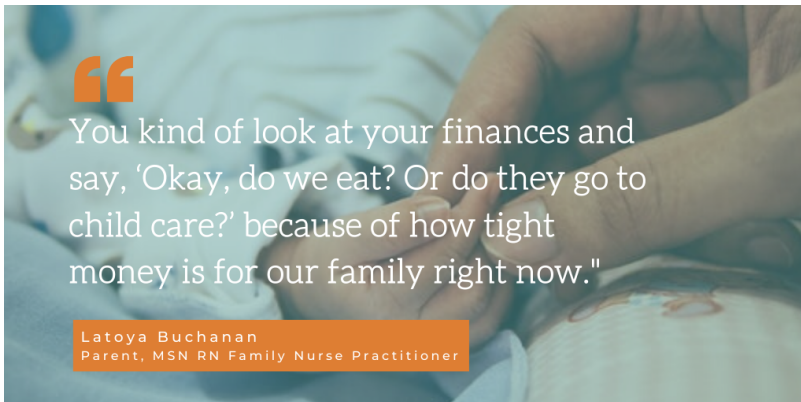
“We had a reduction of enrollment due to parents that are either scared or concerned for their child’s safety to send their children to our facility. I feel that there is a greater risk now since Robeson County children are contracting the virus. Me and my staff are overworked due to trying to maintain social distancing, doing the 3 W’s, wearing face masks, doing temperature checks, health checks, and trying to make sure parents are following guidelines” – Timothy McColskey, Kids’ Academy, Lumberton

“COVID-9 has changed everything that we know. We had 285 children and 36 staff members. We dropped to 25 children and are slowly rebuilding ourselves. We begin our day sanitizing, temperature readings at the door, all day health assessments, more sanitizing and wipe down surfaces on the hour. We are gloved and masked and wear protective clothing. Every day is a new day with a new set of rules to enforce. Each day we shelter in place with small children that cannot social distance nor cover their coughs or sneezes. On the weekends we simply collapse. Collapse our thoughts, our fears, and keep our circles tight so that we could remain healthy so that each one of us could return back to work.” – Mary McAlhane, Big Blue Marble Academy, Indian Trail

“The best way to describe the impact that COVID-19 has had on my business is from THRIVE...to...SURVIVE. Prior to the outbreak of the virus, we cared for happy healthy children every day so that their parents could go to work. Our employees got paid every week and could provide for themselves and their families. As a small business, we were *thriving*. Since COVID-19, we are *surviving*, one day at a time, but just barely. The few parents that are sending their children to us are continuing to pay full tuition, but the funds are barely enough to cover the expenses of teacher pay, monthly lease, utilities, insurance, fees, food, and supplies. I am working fifty hours per week without pay. I pray that when more people return to work and need for their children to return to our center, that we will still be in business.” – Ronda Lemons, Learning Lemon Drops Child Care Center, Pittsboro

“My staff is sanitizing toys with Clorox at night before they leave, in the mornings when they come in, at nap time and throughout the day. It’s taking a lot more supplies to do this, but when we go to the store, we are limited to only two items per person. Making several trips to several stores just to get needed supplies puts a huge burden on the staff. We are very limited as far as staff goes. A lot of us don’t even get lunch hours. Funds are quickly running out. We are only averaging 10 children attending each day. I am in fear of having to close because of no income.” – Wendy Mitchell, Kids-R-Us Preschool and Child Care, Goldsboro

Working families need access to affordable child care



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You kind of look at your finances and say, ‘Okay, do we eat? Or do they go to child care?’ because of how tight money is for our family right now.”

Latoya Buchanan
Parent, MSN RN Family Nurse Practitioner

“I’m a registered nurse, and I am unable to be on the frontlines caring for COVID patients right now because of lack of affordability of child care. Instead, I am at home with my children all day every day. You kind of look at your finances and say, ‘Okay, do we eat? Or do they go to child care?’ because of how tight money is for our family. I need a safe place for my children to go, so I can go and work and be a helping hand right now.” – Latoya Buchanan, Parent, Clayton

“My husband and I are essential employees who depend on our child care center. They operate on narrow margins, and if they have to close, we and others will lose

this essential child care service. There are also limited centers with availability in our area, so if they close it would be extremely difficult to find another situation.” – Megan Arrington, Parent, Carrboro

“I am a single mother of 3 children under 5. One of my two jobs is as a teacher in a child care center. We are open for emergency care, but so few kids are coming in because of COVID-19 that staff hours are cut in half. The current amount of children's fees isn't even enough to pay building rent. If the center closes, not only will I lose one of my jobs, but I will have no childcare for my 3 children while I work my other job. Prior to covid-19 every center in the area was on a wait list. I expect many will be closing forever due to this financial hardship unless there is government intervention.” – Kathleen, Early Childhood Educator and Parent, Bat Cave

“Child care is essential for us. Because both of our children have special needs, it wouldn't be possible for us to both work full-time and care for the children.” – Bethany, Parent, Garner

“I'm worried about childcare right now and what it will look like in the coming year. I'm also immunocompromised and worried about my health and that of the rest of my family if and when my kids return to school. It feels like I'm being asked to make impossible choices - lose my job and a significant source of family income, neglect my children, or risk our health and that of childcare providers. We need leadership and help now.” – Hillary, Parent, Durham

“Child care is as important as health care. Health care workers need to know their children are cared for while they are serving us.” – Sherry Stancliff, Parent, Advance

“Child care is an enormous challenge for our family right now. We are two working parents with children ages 7, 5 and 1. I am worried about extended periods like this over the next year or so, and how we will manage them! I am also worried about our kids' child care teachers and their ability to make ends meet during this time.” – Lindsay, Parent, Raleigh

“It’s tough. We’re out of work and still have to pay daycare while also feeding the kids. Please help.” – Traves, Parent, Clayton

“I desperately need child care again. Working and full-time care for our kids is just not sustainable, but we aren't willing to risk our health and/or the health of others. Not only is child care (and school and camps) necessary so that my husband and I can work (and be physically and mentally healthy), but our child care center provides critical social, developmental and educational opportunities for our child that we cannot provide - even if we weren't working all day.” – Cassie, Parent, Carrboro

“I have a spouse with a compromised immune system, and a small infant, and I am terrified of placing him in child care if centers aren't able to provide the safety and sanitation needed to keep the child care workers, the children and the families safe from the spread of COVID-19. I work full-time and am grateful to be working remotely, but it is impossible to be a quality parent, and worker at the same time. We were not meant to do this! Our family's economic situation won't allow for me to voluntarily leave my job - we depend on both incomes. We are ready for our son to be in child care, but we are simultaneously too afraid to send him. We need to know that the workers are supported and are able to keep themselves safe, that the child care agencies have the resources they need to remain high-quality, and that the children in care will be safe.” – Sarah, Parent, Raleigh

"I am an essential worker, currently furloughed, and so is my spouse. I definitely need care for both my children as everything opens back up. NC must support child care both for essential workers and so that child care centers, which typically operate on very small margins, will be able to remain open for the larger community once restrictions begin lifting fully." – Christina, Parent, Asheville

"Lack of childcare has a ripple effect on all other aspects of a mother's life. To address generational poverty, you must prioritize childcare. I'm a single mother with no family in this state. I moved here for a career opportunity. I have chronic conditions, but want to work and feel as though with support, I could be of service to the community." – Stephanie, Parent, Charlotte

"I am a mother of 3 little kids, my husband and I both work full-time. Child care is essential to our ability to earn money and keep our household afloat. We love and value the people who take care of our kids, and want their jobs and livelihood protected during this vulnerable period." – Isela, Parent, Durham

"My husband is in the army and set to deploy in June and I am pregnant with our second child due in September. It is scary not to know if I will be able to work because I will not have child care and then if I cannot work I will not be able to afford to go on maternity leave for my next child." – Taylor, Parent, Raleigh

Child care teachers are risking their own health to care for children

"I'm an infant teacher on the frontlines right now, and it's hard because babies don't know how to social distance! They need us for all their care - diapers, bottle feeding, extra snuggles. It's a huge concern and there's always the fear that we could catch something and take it home to our families. We love what we do, but with the pandemic, it's just a little bit tougher. But that doesn't stop us from giving our babies that extra love that they need each and every day." – Essence Walker, Child Care Teacher, Charlotte

"Childcare workers need just as much support as other essential workers. We are putting the lives of ourselves and our family at risk to provide care so that healthcare workers and others with families may continue to support our communities!" – Shameka Jordan, Child Care Teacher, Rocky Point

"Emergency funding should be made available to child care centers who remain open in this pandemic crisis. Support the frontline teachers who are working." – Ajay Goyal, Child Care Teacher, Jacksonville

"Our friends need us. Their moms and dads depend on us to take care of their children and prepare them for the next level in learning. They need us and we need them. And we need help so we can get back to work." – Angela Hunter, Child Care Teacher, Charlotte

"The child development community needs extra financial support now and after this crisis is over. We love our jobs and in order for us to continue supporting our children and parents' needs we ask that you support us. We are not just baby sitters. Families need us and depend on us and many cannot go to work if we can't go." – Beverly Murphy, Child Care Teacher, Charlotte

"We have many new rules to follow and a lot of teachers are choosing to stay home for their health, so the ones who are working are working extra hard with weird hours to cover for each other. We need funding for supplies to keep the school family healthy through the crisis and to keep the teachers happy to work. The bonuses are well deserved of the early childhood educators and they are very appreciated but there has always been a need for increased funding to early education centers and that is just showcased more now." – Lane, Child Care Teacher, Greensboro

"I am a child care worker. I have been for 20+ years. It is my passion to love, guide, teach, and make sure these children get what they need. I know many families who have lost long-term jobs. Many who cannot go back to a job as the state opens because their child care center has closed. We, as workers, need proper cleaning supplies because we have always disinfected before this, but do it 10x more now, and unfortunately supplies are scarce. Not only do the parents need us, but the children need us now more than ever!" – Jessica, Child Care Teacher, Pikeville

