

THE MOUNTING COST OF COVID INACTION: *CHILD CARE* COVID-19 On July 15, 2020

U.S. Infections – 3,355,457
U.S. Unemployment – 11.1 Percent

U.S. Deaths – 135,235
Since House Passed Heroes Act – 61 Days

What Is A Child Care Desert?

A child care desert is a region, often in poor, minority, or rural communities, which lacks access to quality child care. Child care deserts were a problem before the pandemic. A [2018 study conducted by the Center for American Progress](#) estimates that more than half of Americans live in a child care desert.

Child Care Fact

A recent survey cited in an [open letter by economists](#) suggests the pandemic could force nearly half of the country's child care providers to close permanently as the cash strapped businesses can no longer support their staff or pay the overhead to run. As of April, one out of three childcare workers had already lost their jobs.

What's The Problem?

Access to child care was a problem long before the pandemic, but with the majority of child care facilities closed or working at a reduced capacity to prevent the spread of the coronavirus we are fast moving toward a crisis. Essential workers, many of whom are in low-wage jobs in child care deserts, have nowhere to send their children when they are forced to return to work. And with economies reopening, with sometimes disastrous results, more workers will be forced to choose between desperately finding someone to care for their children or quitting their jobs or significantly reducing their hours. This has disproportionately affected women who still bear the brunt of home child care in our country, setting their careers back years and depriving the family of a needed paycheck. Our child care system was on a razor's edge before the pandemic due to lack of access and cost barriers (it's estimated the average family spends \$11,000 a year per child on licensed child care), but the consequences of the coronavirus risk a catastrophic failure of the entire system.

What Can We Do?

Many states have warned they will run out of the \$3.5 billion in Child Care Development Block Grants provided in the CARES Act by the end of the month, if they have not already. Last month, [Senate Republicans even rejected a proposal from Senator Murray](#) that would have provided \$50 billion to support child care. Senate Republicans need to recognize the urgency of this crisis and Congress needs to provide the resources necessary to support our child care system.

Where Can I Read More?

[Big New Obstacle For Economic Recovery: Child Care Crisis Holding On Until Help Comes: A Survey Reveals Child Care's Fight To Survive Pandemic Could Scar A Generation Of Working Mothers](#)