

# The Growing Adverse Impacts of COVID-19 on Louisiana Child Care Providers

STATEWIDE SURVEY FINDINGS  
FROM JUNE 15 - JUNE 22, 2020





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The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC) is conducting a series of surveys about the impact of COVID-19 on child care providers, in partnership with Agenda for Children, Child Care Association of Louisiana, Childcare Connections for Northeast Louisiana, Louisiana Association of United Ways, Northwestern State University, On Track by 5 Alliance, Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition, United Way of Southeast Louisiana, and Volunteers of America.

## BACKGROUND

**The first survey of child care providers was conducted March 16 - 23, 2020, one week after the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in Louisiana and one week prior to Governor John Bel Edwards issuing a stay-at-home order for all residents.**

While K-12 schools in Louisiana were ordered closed effective March 16, early learning centers and other child care businesses were permitted to remain open as long as they followed enhanced health and safety protocols, including lower group size requirements.

**A second survey of child care providers was conducted April 13 - 20, 2020, while Louisiana remained under a stay-at-home order, and K-12 school closures were extended through the remainder of the school year.**

A link to the results of these prior surveys may be found at [www.policyinstitutela.org/covid-19-impact-child-care](http://www.policyinstitutela.org/covid-19-impact-child-care).

Effective May 15, Gov. Edwards lifted the stay-at-home order and moved Louisiana into Phase One of reopening. Under Phase One, early care and education providers operated under many of the enhanced health and safety protocols as during the stay-at-home order, including lower teacher-to-child ratio and group size requirements. On June 5, Gov. Edwards moved Louisiana into Phase Two of reopening.

**The third survey was conducted June 15 - 22, 2020. At this time, under Phase Two of reopening, ratios and group sizes for early care and education providers returned to pre-pandemic levels for children ages 2 and under. Teacher-to-child ratios and group sizes for children ages 3 and up increased from Phase One levels, but remained below pre-pandemic allowances.**

The survey again asked child care providers what impact COVID-19 was having on their program or business, including financial losses and closure decisions, and what supports were needed to help providers respond to the public health crisis. *Additional questions about reopened centers and government grant programs were added.*

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM JUNE SURVEY FINDINGS

Results from the June 15 - 22, 2020, survey show the continued challenges and realities facing child care providers in Louisiana as the COVID-19 pandemic stretched into summer and the state began reopening. Most notably:

### Financial Losses for Providers Continued to Grow Substantially During the Pandemic

77% of providers who responded to the survey reported experiencing financial losses due to COVID-19, with losses averaging **\$110,000 per center** as of June 22, translating to an estimated **\$137.5 million** in collective losses statewide.

### Majority of Open Providers Saw Reduced Enrollment Rates

81% of providers open during the survey window were serving fewer children in June than they did in January before the pandemic. On average, enrollment at open providers was **30% less** in June than it was in January.

### Almost Half of Providers Had a Waiting List

45% of providers, including those that were closed during the survey window, had a waiting list of families hoping to enroll their children.

### More Providers Experienced Challenges with Purchasing Needed Cleaning, PPE Supplies

Almost **two-thirds** of providers reported difficulty in obtaining needed supplies, including cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment, and **67%** of providers experienced increased costs for cleaning supplies.

### Less Than 1-in-4 Open Providers Expected Being Able to Survive Long-Term Operations with Current Smaller Group Sizes

Only **22%** of providers open during the survey window, including those that had closed then reopened or remained open throughout the pandemic, responded that they could afford to operate with smaller group sizes for as long as necessary. By contrast, **35%** predicted their businesses could last six months or less, and another **42%** were unsure.

## THE NEED GOING FORWARD

These June survey results, along with prior research and surveys, point to the ongoing supports needed by the early care and education sector so that it may fulfill its critical role of supporting families and businesses in the state's reopening economy. More specifically:

- **The financial losses experienced by the child care sector are likely only going to continue to grow** as providers must balance maintaining healthy and safe environments for children with reduced enrollments – resulting, in part, from required lower teacher-to-child ratios – and increased costs.
- **With almost half of all responding providers reporting they have a waiting list of parents seeking child care, the need for child care clearly still remains.** At the same time, these survey results also suggest some parents are deferring when they return their children to child care, compounding the financial difficulties facing providers with fewer tuition-paying families. However, working parents will inevitably need to be able to put their children back in an early care and education setting. When that time comes, there must be enough open child care providers with available spots to serve those families.
- **If child care centers close or raise tuition in an effort to cover their losses, working parents will struggle to return to work** without ready access to affordable, quality care and education for their children, impacting employer productivity and economic recovery.
- **While federal and state relief fund programs helped many child care providers, these funds largely slowed, rather than fully addressed, the extensive financial losses experienced by providers.** Additional investments will be necessary to ensure there is a child care sector for working parents and their employers to rely on in the future. These investments include support to ensure providers can obtain necessary personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies, and maintain affordability for families.

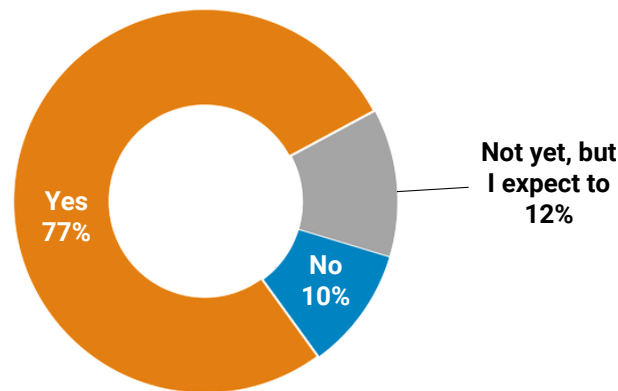
## SURVEY FINDINGS: ALL PROVIDERS

**Financial Losses for Providers Continued to Grow Substantially During the Pandemic:** 77% of providers who responded to the survey reported experiencing financial losses due to COVID-19, with losses averaging \$110,000 per center as of June 22, translating to an estimated \$137.5 million in collective losses statewide.

**\$137.5M**

Estimated statewide losses for child care providers due to COVID-19, as of June 22.

**Figure 1**  
Over Three-Fourths of Providers Experienced Financial Losses Due to COVID-19



Question: Are you experiencing any financial losses due to the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak?

**Almost Half of Providers Had a Waiting List:** 45% of providers, including those that were closed during the survey window, had a waiting list of families hoping to enroll their children.

**Table 2**  
Providers More Likely to Have Waiting List for Children Ages 2 and Under

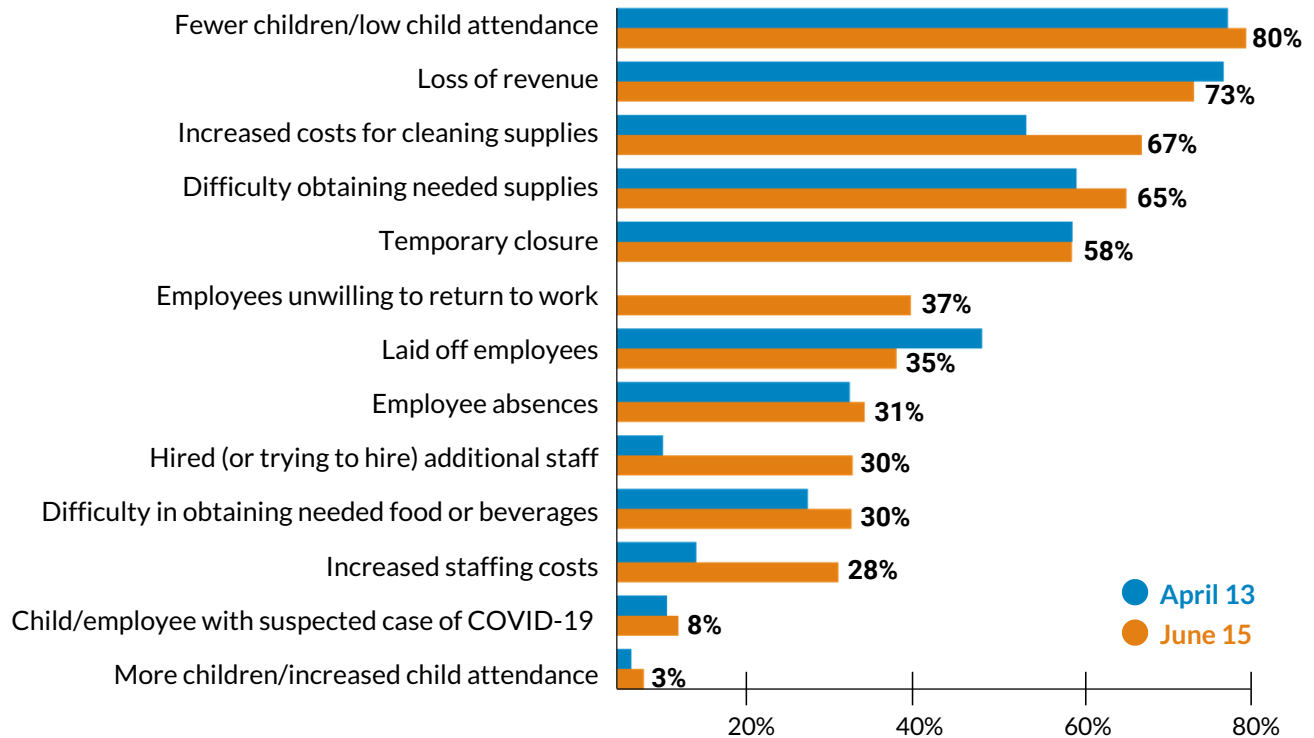
Response	Percent of Responding Participants	
	Closed Providers	Open Providers
<b>Had a waiting list</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>45%</b>
Infants (6 weeks to 12 months)	24%	32%
1-Year-Olds	31%	28%
2-Year-Olds	31%	26%
3-Year-Olds	33%	20%
4-Year-Olds	15%	14%
School Age Children (5 years and up)	4%	12%
<b>Did not have a waiting list</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>55%</b>

Question: If you had a waiting list of children/families wanting to enroll in your business/program last week (June 8th through June 12th), what ages were the children on the waiting list?

Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

**More Providers Experienced Challenges with Purchasing Needed Cleaning, PPE Supplies:** Almost two-thirds of providers reported difficulty in obtaining needed supplies, including cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment, and 67% of providers experienced increased costs for cleaning supplies.

**Figure 3**  
Impacts of COVID-19 on Child Care Providers



Question: [If responded “Yes” to previous question, “Has your business/program been impacted by COVID-19/coronavirus?”] If yes, how? Please check all that apply.

Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

**Most Providers Applied for COVID-19 Relief Funding Programs:** 70% of providers applied to one or more Small Business Administration funding programs, and 77% of providers applied for grant programs administered by the Louisiana Department of Education.

**Table 4**  
Majority of Providers Applied to Paycheck Protection Program

Response	Percent of Responding Participants
<b>Applied to any SBA program</b>	<b>70%</b>
Paycheck Protection Program	61%
Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) / EIDL Advance	30%
SBA Express Bridge Loan	2%
SBA Debt Relief	7%
<b>Did not apply to any SBA program/Not applicable</b>	<b>30%</b>

Question: Did you apply for any of the following Small Business Administration (SBA) funding programs related to COVID-19/coronavirus relief?

Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

**Table 5**  
**Most Providers Applied for Louisiana Department of Education COVID-19 Relief Funds**

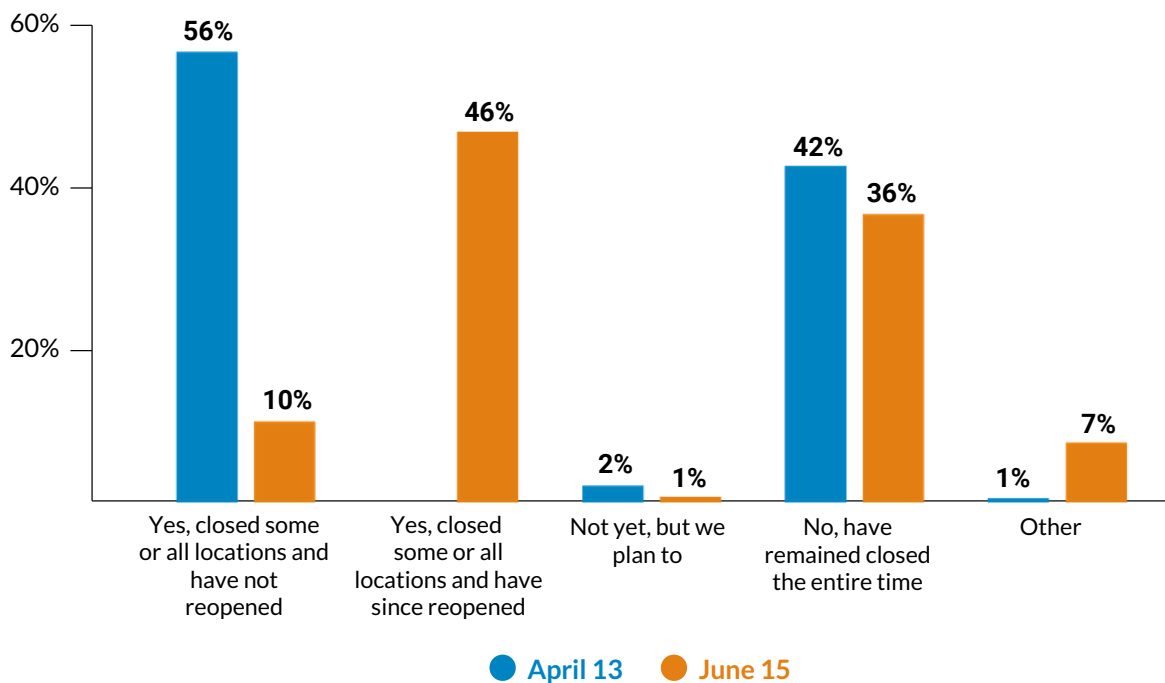
Response	Percent of Responding Participants
<b>Applied to any LDE funding program</b>	<b>77%</b>
Emergency Child Care Relief Grant (part of Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grants, Round 1)	71%
Emergency Child Care Development Fund Response Grant (part of Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grants, Round 1)	36%
Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) Relief Grants, Round 2	65%
<b>Did not apply to any LDE funding program/Not applicable</b>	<b>23%</b>

Question: Did you apply for any of the Louisiana Department of Education funding programs related to COVID-19/coronavirus relief?  
 Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

## SURVEY FINDINGS: CURRENTLY CLOSED PROVIDERS

**Fewer Providers Remained Closed:** Within the survey window, the percentage of providers that remained closed dropped to 10%.

**Figure 6**  
**Many Providers That Temporarily Closed Due to COVID-19 Have Reopened**



Question: Has your business/program closed due to COVID-19/coronavirus?  
 Note: The April 13 survey did not include the "Reopened" response option.



**Nearly One-Third of Closed Providers Expected an Extended Closure Will Force Them to Close Permanently:** On average, those centers each serve 48 children and employ 10 full- and part-time staff members.

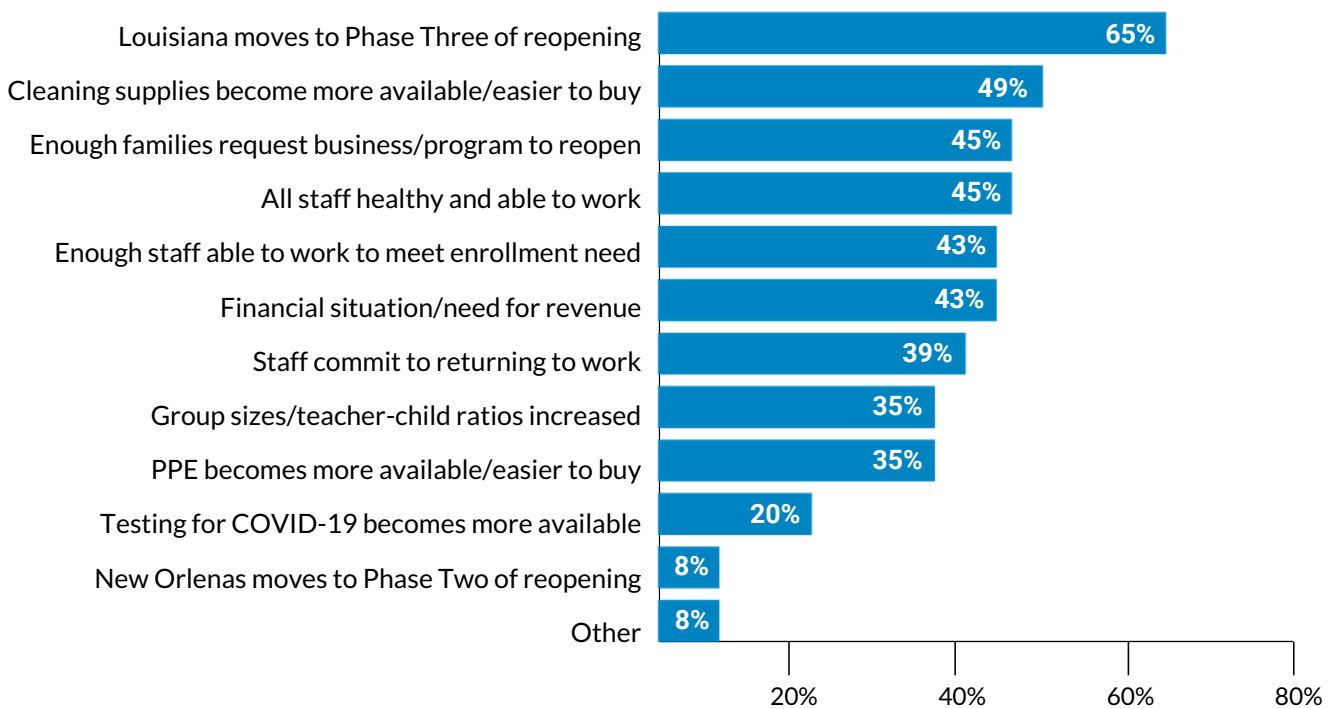
**Table 7**  
**Closed Providers Expected Permanent Program Closures, Staff Layoffs if Faced with Extended Closure**

Response	Percent of Responding Participants
Close program permanently	32%
Layoff employees	29%
Increase program tuition/fees	24%
Reduce employees' hours	17%
Reduce program hours	17%
Other	32%

Question: If your business/program is closed for much longer, what do you think will happen to your business/program?  
 Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%

**Louisiana Moving to Phase Three of Reopening Would Cause Majority of Closed Providers to Reopen:** 65% of closed providers responded that Louisiana moving to Phase Three of reopening would prompt them to reopen.

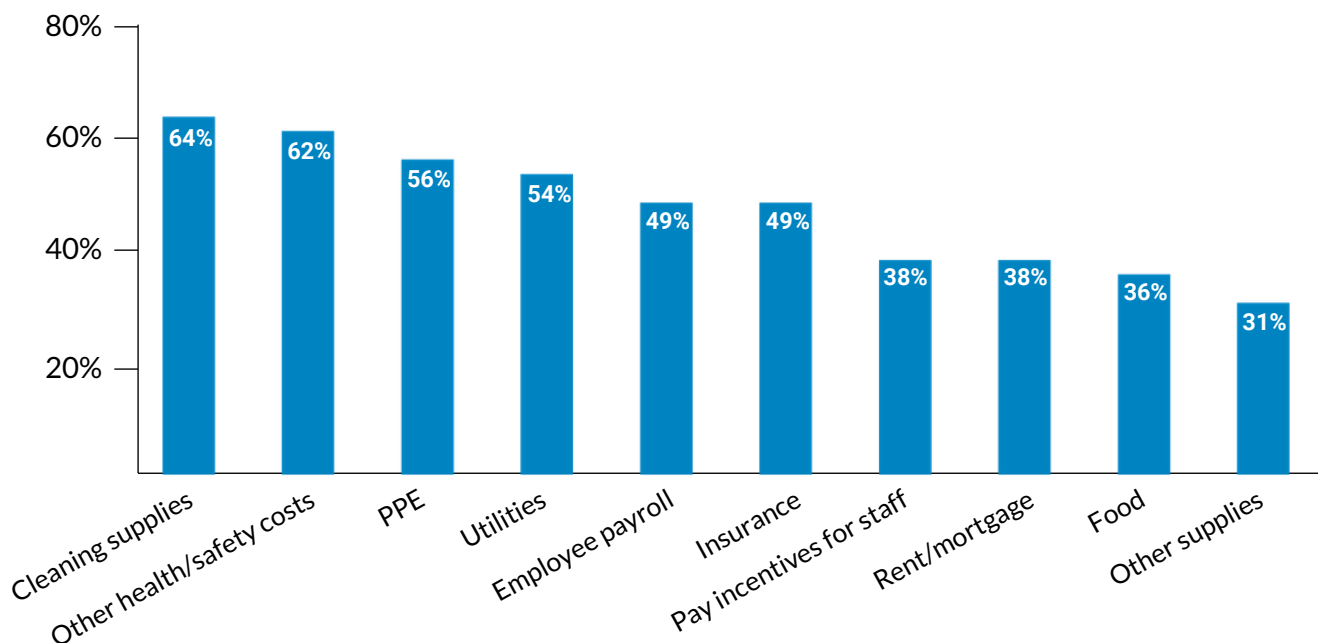
**Figure 8**  
**Moving to Phase Three, Easier Access to Cleaning Supplies Would Prompt Closed Providers to Reopen**



Question: What factors or circumstances are causing or would cause you to reopen your business/program?  
 Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

**Cleaning Supplies, Other Health and Safety Costs Most Common Intended Use of Financial Support for Reopening:** Almost half of closed providers indicated financial support for expenses would help them reopen. The most common uses for the support would be to pay for cleaning supplies (64%), other health/safety costs (62%), and personal protective equipment (56%).

**Figure 9**  
To Reopen, Most Closed Providers Indicated Need for Help with Cleaning, Health/Safety Costs



Question: If you need additional financial support to help REOPEN your business/program, what would it pay for?  
Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

## SURVEY FINDINGS: PROVIDERS THAT CLOSED THEN REOPENED

**Providers Closed for an Average of 60 Days Before Reopening:** Over 90% of reopened providers temporarily closed in March 2020, with 47% reopening in May 2020 and another 44% reopening in June 2020.

**60 days**

Average amount of time that closed child care providers stayed closed before reopening

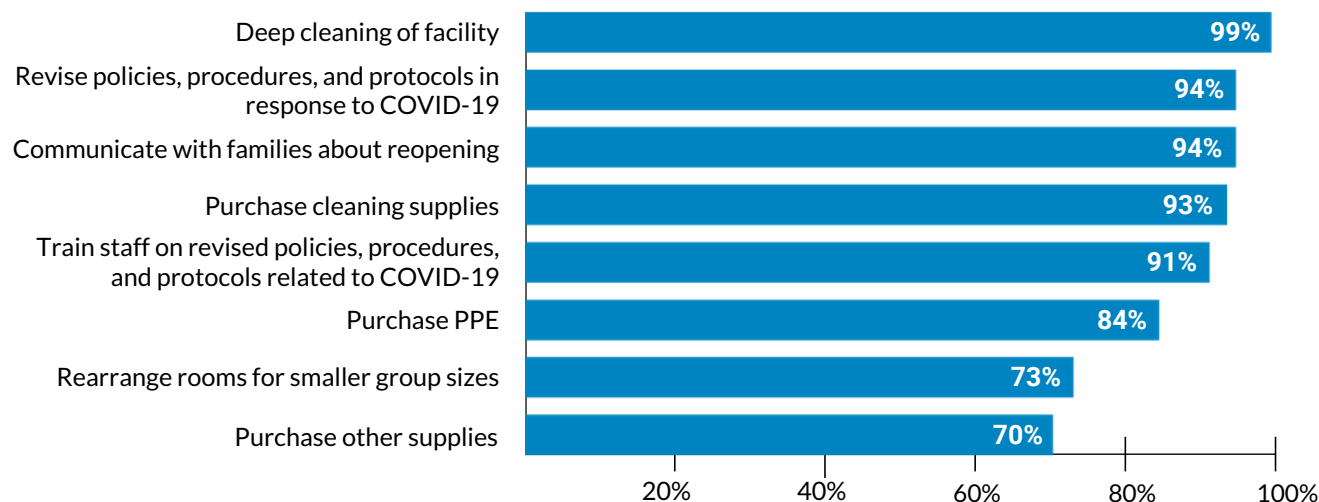
**Table 10**  
Many Providers Temporarily Closed in March and Reopened by Mid-June

	Before March 16	March 16 - March 31	April 1 - April 15	April 16 - April 30	May 1 - May 15	May 16 - May 31	June 1 - June 15	June 16 - June 30
Closed	15%	76%	5%	2%	1%	1%	0.4%	
Reopened			3%	6%	18%	29%	43%	1%

Questions: When did your business/program close? / When did your business/program reopen?

**Three-Fourths of Reopened Providers Spent up to 2 Weeks Preparing for Reopening:** 28% of reopened providers reported needing 2 weeks to prepare for reopening, another 27% reported needing 1 week, and 19% reported needing less than a week. To prepare for reopening, most of these providers focused on cleaning facilities and purchasing cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment; revising procedures, policies, and protocols, and training staff on those revisions; and communicating with families.

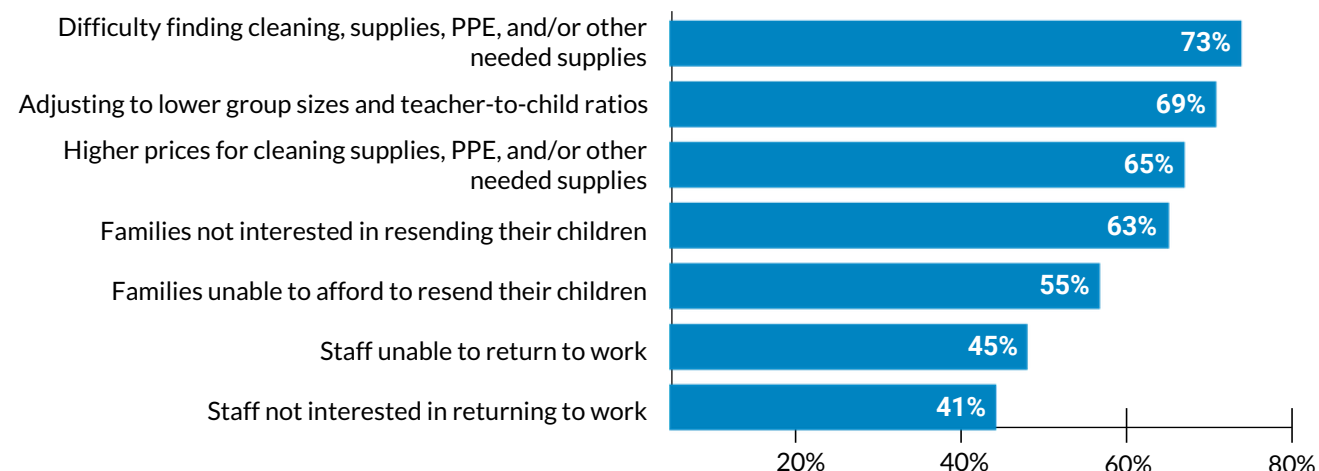
**Figure 11**  
**Providers Focused on Cleaning, Policy Revisions When Preparing for Reopening**



Question: What sort of things did you do to prepare for reopening?  
 Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

**While Preparing to Reopen, Providers Faced Challenges with Purchasing Cleaning Supplies, Adjusting to Lower Teacher-to-Child Ratios, and Families Keeping Children at Home:** The most common challenges providers reported while preparing to reopen included difficulty finding cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, and/or other needed supplies (73%); adjusting to lower group sizes and teacher-to-child ratios (69%); higher prices for cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, and/or other needed supplies (65%); families not interested in resending their children (63%); and families being unable to afford to resend their children (55%).

**Figure 12**  
**Purchasing Cleaning Supplies, Lower Teacher-to-Child Ratios Most Common Challenges for Providers Preparing to Reopen**



Question: What, if any, challenges did you experience while preparing to reopen?  
 Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

## SURVEY FINDINGS: CURRENTLY OPEN PROVIDERS

**Less Than 1-in-4 Open Providers Expected Being Able to Survive Long-Term Operations with Current Smaller Group Sizes:** Only 22% of providers open during the survey window, including those that had closed then reopened or remained open throughout the pandemic, responded that they could afford to operate with smaller group sizes for as long as necessary. By contrast, 35% predicted their businesses could last six months or less, and another 42% were unsure.

**Table 13**  
**Less Than One-Quarter of Currently Open Providers Expected Being Able to Afford Long-Term Operations with Smaller Group Sizes**

Response	Percent of Responding Participants
Less than 1 month	6%
1 - 3 months	23%
4 - 6 months	6%
7 - 9 months	0.4%
<b>As long as necessary</b>	<b>22%</b>
Not sure	42%

Question: How long do you think you can afford to operate with the required smaller group sizes?

**Majority of Open Providers Saw Reduced Enrollment Rates:** 81% of providers open during the survey window were serving fewer children in June 2020 than they did in January 2020 before the pandemic. On average, enrollment at open providers was 30% less in June than it was in January.

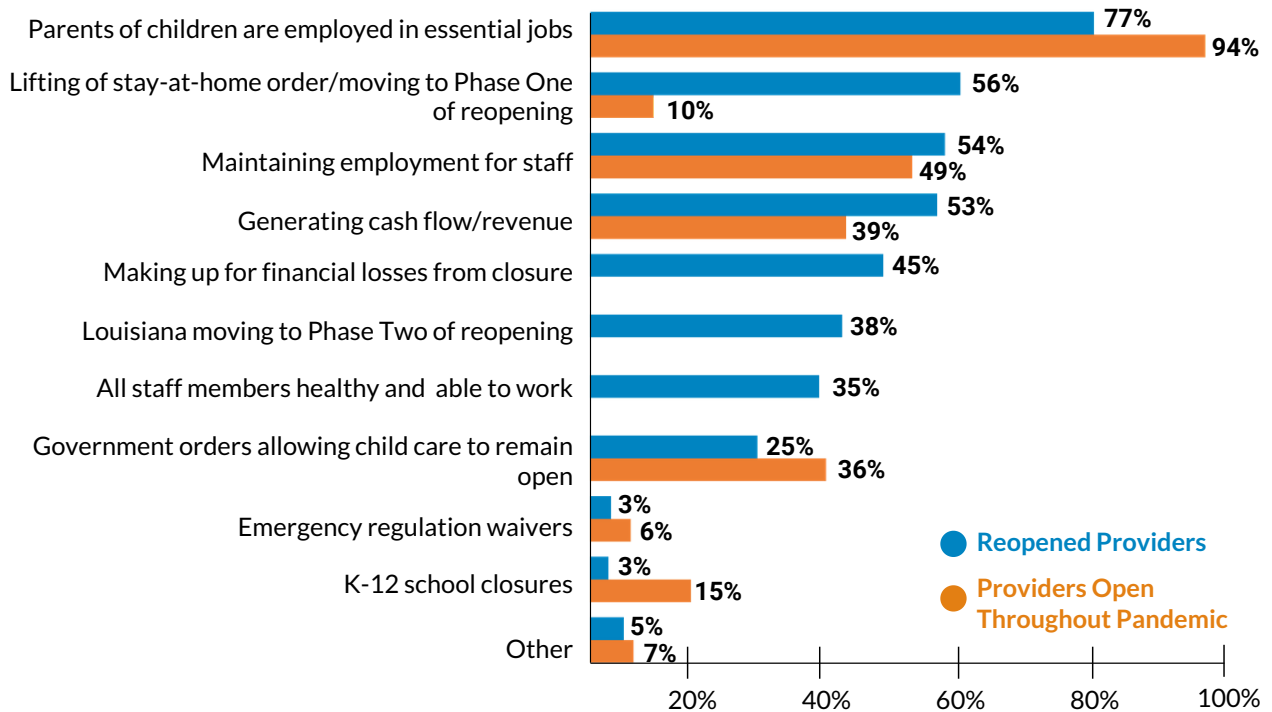
**Table 14**  
**Currently Open Providers Continued to Experience Reduced Enrollment Rates**

Current Enrollment as Percent of January Enrollment	Percent of Responding Participants	
	April 13	June 15
More than 100% of Jan. Enrollment	2%	8%
100% of Jan. Enrollment	8%	9%
81% to 99% of Jan. Enrollment	4%	9%
61% to 80% of Jan. Enrollment	2%	19%
41% to 60% of Jan. Enrollment	11%	24%
21% to 40% of Jan. Enrollment	44%	20%
1% to 20% of Jan. Enrollment	15%	6%
No Children Enrolled	11%	2%

Question: What was the typical daily enrollment for each age group at your business/program last week?

**Serving Children of Essential Workers, Maintaining Employment for Staff Influenced Decision to Remain Open or Reopen:** 85% of currently open providers cited parents with essential jobs as a factor influencing their decision to reopen or remain open. Over half indicated maintaining employment for staff also influenced their decision.

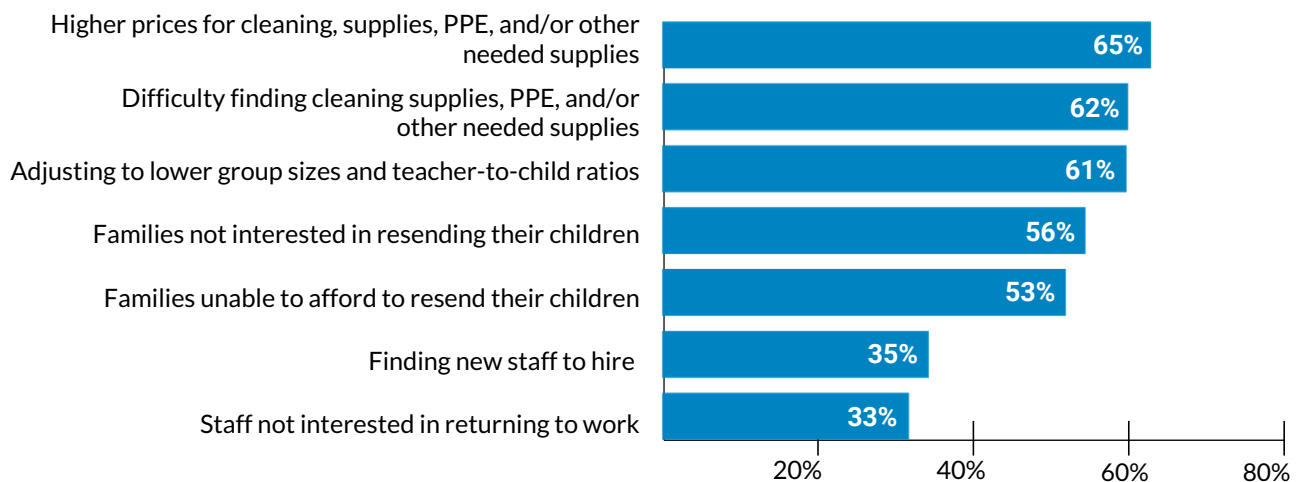
**Figure 15**  
**Serving Essential Workers, Employing Staff Influenced Provider Decisions to Remain Open or Reopen**



Questions: [Reopened Providers] What factors influenced your decision to reopen your business/program? [Providers Open Throughout Pandemic] What factors influenced your decision to keep your business/program open?  
 Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

**While Open, Providers Also Faced Challenges with Purchasing Cleaning Supplies, Adjusting to Lower Teacher-to-Child Ratios, and Families Keeping Children at Home:** At least half of providers open during the survey window reported challenges with higher prices for and/or difficulty finding cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, and other needed supplies; adjusting to lower group sizes and teacher-to-child ratios; and families not interested in and/or unable to afford resending their children.

**Figure 16**  
**Over Half of Currently Open Providers Experienced Challenges with Purchasing Cleaning Supplies, Adjusting to Lower Teacher-to-Child Ratios, Families Keeping Children at Home**



Questions: [Reopened Providers] What, if any, challenges are you experiencing since reopening? [Providers Open Throughout Pandemic] What, if any, challenges are you experiencing while remaining open?  
 Note: Respondents may have selected more than one response. Percentages may total to more than 100%.

# APPENDIX

## Survey Methodology

For this survey, LPIC developed and administered the survey online through Survey Monkey from June 15, 2020, to June 22, 2020. The Child Care Association of Louisiana and resource and referral agencies emailed survey links to providers throughout the state. The Louisiana Department of Education also shared the survey link in its newsletter to child care providers on June 18, 2020.

Prospective respondents included any child care provider in Louisiana. Of the approximately 1,624 licensed child care centers and family child care providers in the state, 666 providers representing 815 locations responded to the survey, answering some or all of the questions. For questions where some survey respondents did not provide an answer, the included results percentages reflect calculations based only on the number of survey respondents providing an answer to the question. For example, if only 100 survey respondents answered a question, the results would reflect what percentage of those 100 respondents selected each answer.

## Characteristics of Survey Respondents

### Regions of Responding Child Care Providers

Region (Parishes)	Percent of Responding Providers
<b>Acadiana</b> <i>(Acadia, Avoyelles, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, Rapides, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermilion, Vernon)</i>	20%
<b>Capitol Region</b> <i>(Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana)</i>	24%
<b>Northeast Louisiana</b> <i>(Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, West Carroll)</i>	10%
<b>Northwest Louisiana</b> <i>(Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, De Soto, Grant, Jackson, La Salle, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Webster, Winn)</i>	10%
<b>Southeast Louisiana</b> <i>(Assumption, Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Terrebonne, Washington)</i>	31%
<b>Southwest Louisiana</b> <i>(Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis)</i>	6%

### Program Type of Responding Child Care Providers

Program Type	Percent of Responding Participants
Type III Center	69%
Type II Center	7%
Type I Center	12%
Family Child Care	9%
In-Home Child Care	3%

