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Contact

Jodi Askins
jodiaskins@gmail.com
272-444-1860 (mobile)

New Survey: Sunsetting Pandemic Relief for Pennsylvania Child Care Sector will Raise Tuition for Working Families *Congress must act to Save Child Care*

HARRISBURG (December 15, 2022) – According to a new poll from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 62% of Pennsylvania child care center directors surveyed reported that they will have to raise tuition as one-time federal pandemic relief comes to an end. Additionally, 29% reported they will have to cut staff salaries, as they will be unable to sustain the increases the federal funds allowed them to offer. This is bad news for working families in Pennsylvania who are struggling to find and afford child care.

Over the course of the pandemic, Pennsylvania utilized federal relief funding to stabilize the child care sector. This included one-time bonuses for child care teachers and increased subsidy payments for providers to increase staff salaries. These efforts helped prevent an outright collapse of the commonwealth's child care system, however more than 1,800 programs closed from the start of the pandemic through November 30, 2022.

"The American Rescue Plan funds have provided immediate, necessary relief to stabilize many child care providers in the short term. However, those one-time funds have not yet been able to solve the on-going staffing crisis," said Jen DeBell, executive director, Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children (PennAEYC). "We know the critical role child care plays not just for children and families, but if programs continue to struggle to recruit and retain staff, our entire economy is impacted."

Even with the federal relief efforts, the survey showed that more than a third (34%) of all early childhood educators currently working in the field have considered leaving their job. For family child care providers, almost half (46%) considered leaving. NAEYC's survey shows the continued impact that low wages is having on the sector resulting in prolonged staffing shortages and wait lists for families seeking child care with 57% of surveyed centers continuing to serve fewer children.

"I would have been closed a long time ago if not for the funds received since March of 2020. But, my center is still in jeopardy of closing if I am unable to find and keep staff to get back

to attendance capacity. I'm not bringing in enough funds from subsidies and private pay alone." Kevin Crane, Program Director and Founder, Kids Connection.

"The workforce crisis in the child care sector continues to prevent families from finding child care," said Cara Ciminillo, executive director, Trying Together. "Classrooms and entire facilities across Pennsylvania are closing because compensation is too low to attract and retain early childhood educators."

Congress is currently negotiating a deal to fund the federal government through the end of 2023. Any deal should include substantial and sustainable investments to further stabilize our child care system to meet the needs of Pennsylvania's businesses and working families.

The survey conducted between October 5, 2022, and October 23, 2022, details the current child care staffing crisis reported by 941 individuals working in Pennsylvania child care programs and its effects on working families' ability to access care.

Survey Data Summary:

- Due to the staffing crisis:
 - 57% of centers continue to serve fewer children.
- Due to a lack of competitive wages:
 - 46% of family child care providers; 35% of minority-owned child care providers; and 34% of all child care providers reported that they are considering leaving their job/closing their doors.
- When federal one-time grant payments stop:
 - 62% of center directors reported they will have to raise tuition, negatively impacting families.
 - 29% of both centers and family providers reported they will have to cut wages.

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