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Facing a Care Crunch: Childcare Disruption and Economic Hardships for Maine Parents during COVID-19

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Cover Page Footnote

The author would like to thank her colleagues at the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University and the two anonymous reviewers for their guidance on earlier drafts of this work.

Facing a Care Crunch:

Childcare Disruption and Economic Hardships for Maine Parents during COVID-19

by Sarah F. Small

Abstract

Pandemic-related childcare center closures along with virtual schooling forced many Maine parents to juggle their paid work with care responsibilities, often with dire economic consequences. In this article, I examine changes in the state's childcare landscape and illustrate how the childcare crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic affected Mainers' economic wellbeing. Using Household Pulse Survey data, I show how care disruptions dampened Mainer's incomes and their ability to work, placing many in precarious economic situations. I conclude with an investigation of the effectiveness of policy solutions like the Child Tax Credit and further policy suggestions to support childcare in the state.

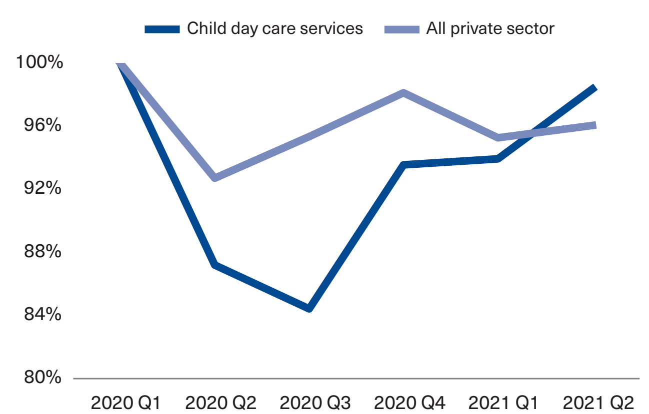
INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has been disruptive for all Mainers, but was especially challenging for Maine families with children. With childcare center closures and virtual schooling, many parents found themselves juggling their paid work with care responsibilities, sometimes with dire economic consequences for their households. Compared to other states, Maine has a historically robust childcare infrastructure. Analyses from 2018 indicate that Maine had the lowest rate in the nation of residents living in a childcare desert (defined as a Census tract where there are more than three times as many children as licensed childcare slots). In fact, just 22 percent of Mainers lived in a childcare desert in 2018—a far cry from Utah, which had the highest rate at 77 percent, and substantially lower than other northern New England states like Massachusetts (53 percent), New Hampshire (46.3 percent), and Vermont (34.5 percent) (Malik et al. 2018).

Maine's childcare landscape, however, did not fare well during the onset of COVID-19, which put parents in difficult economic situations. As Figure 1 illustrates, in the third quarter of 2020, the state's childcare workforce had shrunk to 84 percent of its first quarter levels. Overall private employment in Maine shrunk in less dramatic proportions in 2020, hitting a low in the second quarter of 2020, where employment levels were 93 percent of those in the first quarter.

While statewide childcare employment fully recovered to prepandemic levels in 2021, in many counties, childcare employment remains below prepandemic levels (Table 1). For instance, in the second quarter of 2021, Waldo County had just 83.6 percent of the childcare workers it had in the beginning of 2020. Similarly, the childcare workforces in Washington County (85.5 percent), Knox County (90.4

FIGURE 1: **Maine Employment as a Share of 2020 Quarter 1 Levels**



Note: Sample limited to private sector employment in Maine.

Source: Author's analysis of US Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators.

TABLE 1: **Maine Child Day Care Employment as a Share of 2020 Quarter 1 Levels, by County**

	Q2 2020 (%)	Q3 2020 (%)	Q2 2022 (%)
Androscoggin	92.0	94.8	95.2
Aroostook	92.9	92.9	104.8
Cumberland	89.2	84.3	98.2
Franklin	73.4	61.7	97.9
Hancock	81.7	77.2	92.0
Kennebec	90.2	91.0	101.5
Knox	75.6	73.3	90.4
Lincoln	76.4	78.2	112.7
Oxford	87.2	87.2	114.0
Penobscot	90.3	87.5	96.6
Sagadahoc	87.0	85.7	103.9
Somerset	69.0	67.8	101.1
Waldo	75.3	76.7	83.6
Washington	83.9	83.9	85.5
York	83.3	79.0	96.8

Note: Piscataquis County excluded due to small sample size. Sample limited to private-sector child day care employment in Maine.
Source: Author's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators.

percent), and Hancock County (92.0 percent) were still smaller than they were in the first quarter of 2020.

These data imply that childcare provisions suffered during the onset of COVID-19 and still have not recovered in many areas of Maine. Ultimately, without adequate, accessible, and affordable child care, parents in Maine will face economic hardship, which will in turn dampen the state's macroeconomy. In this article, I look at how the care economy (or lack thereof) has affected Mainers' economic wellbeing. Using Household Pulse Survey data, I examine how the state's pandemic childcare crisis is related to parents' financial wellbeing and their ability to work. I conclude with an investigation of the effectiveness of policy solutions, like the Child Tax Credit, and offer further suggestions to boost the childcare landscape.

CHILDCARE DISRUPTIONS AND THEIR ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

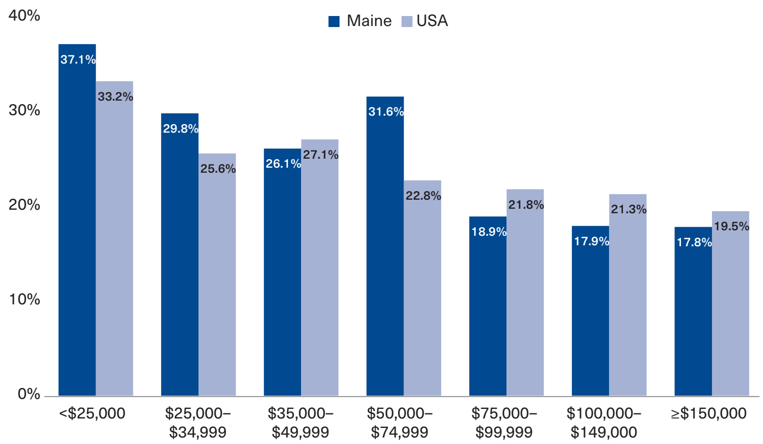
Household Pulse Surveys paint a picture of how childcare and school closures affected parents and their ability to work. Care disruptions were especially common during the immediate onset of the pandemic in 2020, but unfortunately, Household Pulse Survey only asked questions on childcare disruptions starting in April 2021. From then on, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they experienced childcare disruptions. More specifically, the survey question was written as follows:

> At any time in the last 4 weeks, were any children in the household unable to attend daycare or another childcare arrangement as a result of childcare being closed, unavailable, unaffordable, or because you are concerned about your child's safety in care? Please include before school care, after school care, and all other forms of childcare that were unavailable.

Over April to December 2021, 23.7 percent of Maine households with children under age 12 indicated that their childcare arrangements were disrupted. This rate is on par with the national average (23.9 percent) and with peer states (e.g., New Hampshire [23.6 percent] and Massachusetts [23.9 percent]). However, childcare disruptions were more commonly felt by low-income households in Maine. Among respondents with children and with household incomes less than $25,000, about 37 percent reported experiencing a childcare disruption. Maine's childcare disruptions were slightly more common among low-income families compared to national averages (Figure 2).

Unsurprisingly, households with young children were more likely to experience care disruptions than those with older children. The data indicate that 20.7 percent of Maine households with children aged 5 to 11 experienced a childcare disruption in April through December 2021, but among households with children under age 5, this rate was 31.1 percent. These differences are likely attributable to many public schools maintaining in-person learning in 2021, while several private care centers closed temporarily (or permanently) during COVID outbreaks. Indeed, according to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, several care centers remain permanently closed: in February of 2020, the state had a total of 1,835 licensed childcare programs. But as of March 2021, Maine had just 95 percent

FIGURE 2: **Households Experiencing Childcare Disruptions, April to December 2021, by Household Income**



Note: Aggregated over respondents from survey weeks 28–40. Sample limited to Maine respondents with children under age 12.

Source: Author's weighted calculations using Household Pulse Survey data.

of the pre-COVID licensed programs at just 1,713 (Lambrew and Mills 2021).

Reduced access to childcare during COVID-19 limited Maine parents' ability to fully participate in paid work. Trostel (2021), using Current Populations Surveys data, shows that childcare problems were only a small share of the reason employed Mainers were absent from work in 2020, but pandemic-related childcare disruptions also kept many Mainers from their typical work schedules or kept them out of the labor force entirely.

The Household Pulse Surveys asked respondents who experienced childcare disruptions the following question: "Which if any of the following occurred in the last 4 weeks as a result of childcare being closed or unavailable?" Respondents were able to choose one or more of the following options:

- Unpaid leave
- Used paid leave
- Cut hours
- Left job
- Lost job
- Did not look for job
- Supervised children while working
- Other
- None of the above

Maine parents most commonly indicated that they used paid leave (31.0 percent), cut their hours (27.1 percent), supervised children while working (23.8 percent), and used unpaid leave (22.9 percent) (Table 2). Few indicated they lost their job (2.4 percent) or left their job (8.9 percent). Among other northern New England states, and compared to the national average, Maine respondents were more likely than most to take paid or unpaid leave due to childcare disruptions. This statistic suggests that many parents were able to keep their jobs despite care disruptions. High rates of parents using paid leave might suggest many Maine employers were flexible as their employees faced childcare challenges.

As illustrated in Table 3, however, Mainers with household incomes less than $50,000 frequently indicated that, as a result of the care lapse, they cut their hours (20.5%) or left their jobs (14.6%). These data suggest that childcare disruptions made low-income households' economic precarity even worse. Further, just 11.9 percent of households earning less than $50,000 were able to supervise their children while working, compared to 17.8 percent of households earning $50,000 to $99,999 and 34.9 percent of those making $100,000 or more. I do not mean to imply that supervising children while working is sustainable or ideal for working parents, however. Research has found that parents who worked from home during the pandemic suffered greater productivity losses than nonparents who worked from home (Gibbs et al. 2021). This finding is especially troublesome for women, who likely took on a larger share of child care in many of these households, and therefore may have been excluded from consideration for raises or promotions (Arntz et al. 2020).

Households with young children also responded to care disruptions slightly differently than households with older children. Households with children under age 5 were more likely to have indicated they did not look for a job or they left their job due to a care disruption than households with older children, which dampened young families' economic potential. Households with children between ages 5 and 11 were most likely to have been able to supervise their children while working, and generally, households with older

TABLE 2: **Consequences of Childcare Disruptions by State, April to December 2021**

	Maine (%)	Massachu-setts (%)	New Hampshire (%)	Vermont (%)	United States (%)
Used paid leave	31.0	25.1	22.4	27.8	23.1
Cut hours	27.1	27.7	20.7	29.6	23.7
Supervised children while working	23.8	31.0	22.9	24.5	25.5
Unpaid leave	22.9	14.6	15.4	22.2	16.9
Left job	8.9	9.6	4.6	6.7	9.3
Did not look for job	8.6	11.4	7.0	9.8	10.8
Lost job	2.4	2.2	2.0	3.1	3.7
Other	7.1	6.2	6.2	4.4	5.5
None of the above	7.4	8.0	5.3	3.9	7.5

Note: Aggregated over respondents from survey weeks 28–40, sample limited to households experiencing care disruptions. Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select more than one option.
Source: Author's analysis of survey-weighted Household Pulse Surveys.

children faced fewer consequences of care disruptions.

Maine's childcare infrastructure has not fully recovered from the effects of the pandemic and still has room for improvement. Without more robust care infrastructures, Mainers will be left out of the labor force or hindered in advancing their careers, which will further hinder the state's economic recovery. Additionally, the data suggest that low-income families and parents with young children faced especially dire economic consequences as a result of the COVID-19 childcare crisis. Cutting work hours, taking unpaid leave, or staying out of the labor force entirely to care for children meant that many parents' economic hardships were exacerbated due to lost income.

TABLE 3: **Consequences of Care Disruptions by Household Income Group, April to December 2021**

	% with income <\$50,000	% with income \$50,000–\$99,999	% with income ≥\$100,000
Unpaid leave	29.3	29.9	8.6
Cut hours	25.3	32.7	23.8
Used paid leave	22.2	37.4	31.4
Left job	14.1	4.7	8.6
Did not look for job	11.1	9.3	6.7
Supervised children while working	10.1	23.4	34.3
Lost job	6.1	0.0	1.9
Other	7.1	11.2	3.8
None of the above	12.1	3.7	5.7

Note: Aggregated over respondents from survey weeks 28-40, sample limited to Maine households experiencing care disruptions. Percentages do not sum to 100 percent because respondents could select more than one option.
Source: Author's analysis of survey-weighted Household Pulse Surveys

DID THE ADVANCED CHILD TAX CREDIT PAYMENTS HELP?

With many children across the state facing food and housing insecurity and many parents facing economic issues due to childcare disruptions, policies that lift children and parents out of poverty are pivotal to economic recovery from the pandemic. Nationally, advanced Child Tax Credits have helped many families escape poverty (Parolin et al. 2021). In this section, I examine whether the advanced Child Tax Credit payments helped Maine families pay for child care or if other necessities took priority.

Under the American Rescue Plan of 2021, advance payments of up to half the 2021 Child Tax Credit were sent to eligible taxpayers on a monthly basis. It was the first time the credit was delivered monthly, which was intended to help parents cover expenses in the wake of economic challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and its corresponding childcare crisis. Generally, qualifying households received up to $300 a month for children up to age 6 and $250 for those ages 6 through 17, from July through December 2021.

During that time, the Household Pulse Surveys asked respondents who received Child Tax Credit Payments to indicate how the used it. They could select one or more of the following options:

- Food (groceries, eating out, take-out)
- Clothing (clothing, accessories, shoes)
- Child care (formal facility, paying family or caregiver directly)
- School books and supplies
- School tuition
- Tutoring services
- After school programs (other than tutoring and child care)
- Recreational goods (sports and fitness equipment, bicycles, toys, games)
- Rent
- Mortgage
- Utilities and telecommunications (natural gas, electricity, cable, internet, cellphone)
- Vehicle payments (scheduled or monthly)
- Paying down credit card, student loans, or other debts
- Charitable donations or giving to family members
- Savings or investment

TABLE 4: **Use of Child Tax Credit by Income**

	% Maine households overall	% with income <$50,000	% with income $50,000–$100,000	% with income ≥$100,000
Food (groceries, eating out, take-out)	32.2	34.9	34.0	24.5
Utilities and telecommunications	18.6	28.0	18.8	9.2
Clothing (clothing, accessories, shoes)	14.6	18.5	14.4	9.2
Savings or investments	14.1	7.3	15.2	16.7
Paying down credit card, student loans, or other debts	12.7	12.4	12.8	11.7
Mortgage	10.1	6.5	12.8	10.3
Child care (formal facility, paying family or caregiver directly)	9.4	6.5	9.5	12.3
School books and supplies	9.0	12.0	7.6	4.7
Vehicle payments (scheduled or monthly)	8.8	9.8	8.4	5.8
Rent	6.2	14.2	3.8	0.3
Other	4.2	2.5	4.6	4.5
Recreational goods (sports and fitness equipment, bicycles, toys, games)	2.7	2.9	2.4	2.8
After-school programs (other than tutoring and child care)	2.5	1.1	2.2	3.3
School tuition	2.4	0.7	2.4	3.9
Tutoring services	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3
Charitable donations or giving to family members	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.6

Note: Aggregated over respondents from weeks 34–40, sample limited to Maine households that indicated receipt of Child Tax Credit payments.
Source: Author's analysis of survey-weighted Household Pulse Survey data

The data suggest households with young children heavily relied on Child Tax Credit payments to cover child-care costs: among households with children under age 5, 28.9 percent indicated they had spent some of the money on child care. As illustrated in Table 4, however, childcare spending was not necessarily a priority for Maine parents overall, particularly for the state's lower-income families.

Maine families largely used the Child Tax Credit payments to cover other essentials like food, utilities, and clothing (Table 4). Among all Maine respondents, 32.2 percent of those who received the Child Tax Credit payments spent at least some of the money on food. Other common uses for the payments were utilities and telecommunication, clothing, and savings or investments. The least common responses were charitable donations, tutoring services, and school tuition. Just 2.7 percent of Maine respondents indicated they spent the Child Tax Credit payments on recreation.

Low-income households in Maine were less likely to be able to save or invest Child Tax Credit payments. Just 7.3 percent of households earning less than $50,000 per year indicated that saved some of the money compared to 15.2 percent of households with incomes between $50,000 and $100,000 and 16.7 percent of households with incomes of $100,000 or more. Low-income households were also much more likely to have spent their Child Tax Payments on food, utilities, clothing, rent, and school books and supplies compared to those with higher incomes. By contrast, higher-income households were more likely to have been able to spend payments on child care, after-school programs, and school tuition. These results suggest that while both lower- and higher-income households spent their Child Tax Credit payments on essentials, higher income households were better positioned to have spent the funds on enrichment activities for their children.

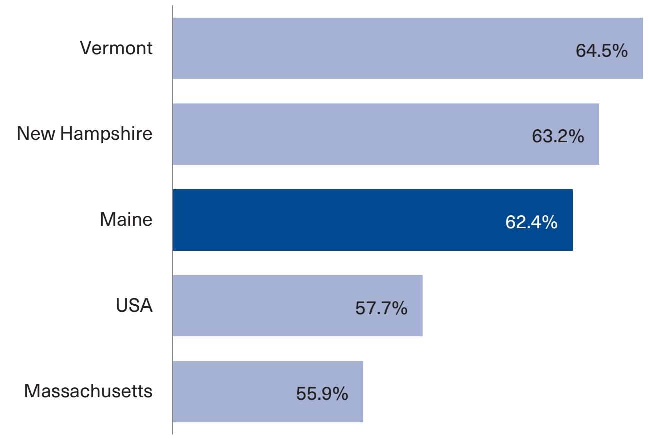
While it is clear that the Child Tax Credit payments were helpful for all families, they were especially helpful for low-income families to meet their basic needs. Low-income families in Maine were among the most likely to have faced childcare disruptions in 2021 and were most likely to have lost labor income as a result of care disruptions. Further, given Maine families with children experienced higher rates of food insecurity than those without children, the Child Tax Credits were shown to be important factors in reducing this hardships for parents (Karpman et al. 2022).

Many low-income families with children, however, did not report having received the Child Tax Credit Payments. Household Pulse surveys asked respondents to indicate whether or not they received Child Tax Credit payments. More specifically, the survey question was as follows:

> In the last 4 weeks, did you or anyone in your household receive a 'Child Tax Credit' payment, that is an advance payment from the expansion of the child tax credit as part of the Federal Government's 2021 American Rescue Plan? Please report 'yes' if you received the payment as a paper check or as a direct deposit.

Within Maine, and across the six weeks during which the question was asked, 62.4 percent of households with children indicated they received the payments. While this was higher than the national average (57.7 percent), it was

FIGURE 3: **Households That Received Child Tax Credit Payments**



Note: Aggregated over respondents from weeks 34–40, sample limited to households with children.

Source: Author's analysis of survey-weighted Household Pulse Survey data.

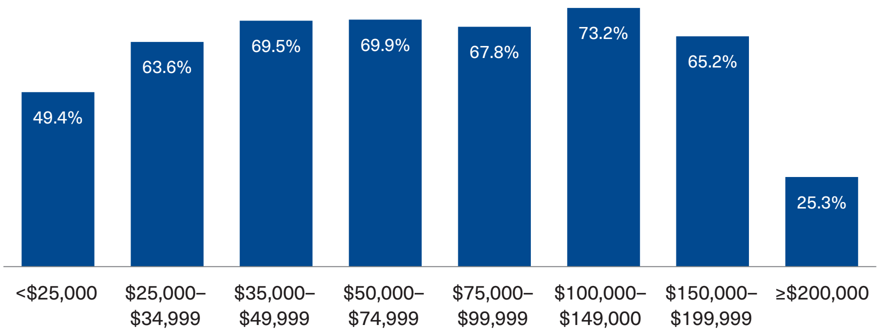
slightly lower than in peer states: for instance, 64.5 percent of households with children in Vermont and 63.2 percent in New Hampshire received the payments (Figure 3). Although Child Tax Credit payments were reduced or phased out among the highest-income households, most Maine households with children qualified for the payments. It is therefore concerning that only 62.4 percent of Mainers indicated they had received it.

Receipt of the Child Tax Credit appears to be underreported on the Household Pulse Survey, which is often the case with public benefits reported in surveys (Celhay et al. 2021; Davern et al. 2009). In fact, scholars comparing Household Pulse estimates with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) administrative data suggest that Pulse respondents underreport receipt of Child Tax Credit payments (Karpman et al. 2021). In Maine in particular, 131,000 payments were issued to 216,000 qualifying children (Office of Tax Analysis 2021). Still, Karpman et al. (2021) suggest that Household Pulse data are useful for assessing patterns by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

According to Household Pulse Survey data, the highest-income households in Maine (those earning $200,000 or more) were among the least likely to have reported receiving the payments because the Child Tax Credit payments began to phase out for high-income households (Figure 4). Households with income exceeding $400,000 (married filing jointly) or $200,000 (other filing statuses) were docked $50 per each $1,000 over the threshold, which began to disqualify many of the highest earners from the credit altogether. However, low-income households with children in Maine were also some of the least likely to have reported receiving the credit, which is concerning. Among Pulse Survey respondents with household incomes less than $25,000 and children in the household, just 49.4 percent reported receiving payments. This result is consistent with national-level findings on Child Tax Credit receipt (Karpman et al. 2021). Why did so few of Maine's lowest-income households receive the credit? Many low-income households do not file taxes, and receipt of the payments required either the filing of 2019 or 2020 taxes or claiming an economic impact payment through the IRS's nonfiler tool. It is likely, therefore, that while many of these low-income households qualified, they did not access they payments through tax filing or through the IRS tool. These data from the Household Pulse Surveys suggest that Child Tax Credit payments helped many Maine families stay in their homes and purchase food. However, many of the lowest-income households did not have access to the payments: a policy failure that needs to be addressed should advanced Child Tax Credits payments be considered again in the future, either at the federal or state level.

As legislators waffle on implementing Child Tax Credit payments on a more regular basis, these data should be illustrative of the assistance they provide to families and of the government's failure to provide the benefits to many families facing economic challenges.

FIGURE 4: **Households Receiving Child Tax Credit Payments, by Income**



Note: Aggregated over respondents from weeks 34–40, sample limited to Maine households with children.

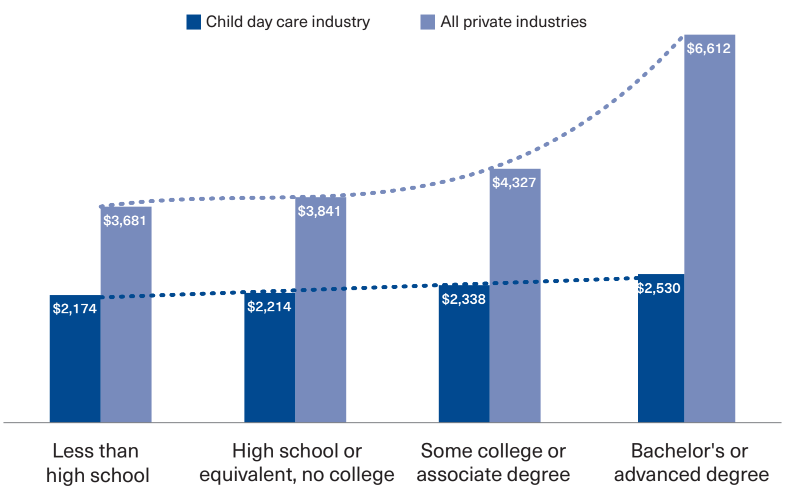
Source: Author's analysis of survey-weighted Household Pulse Survey data.

POLICY SOLUTIONS AND MAIN TAKEAWAYS

As the data illustrate, many Maine parents faced work disruptions as a result of childcare disruptions. Limited access to child care meant low-income working parents faced negative economic consequences, as many had to take unpaid leave, cut their hours, or leave the labor market entirely. The advanced Child Tax Credit payments helped many families pay for essentials, yet the payments did not get to many of those who needed it most, nor did they help boost parents' access to child care. Several studies have indicated that affordable and accessible child care can help boost families' economic wellbeing by getting parents back to work and can ultimately boost the macroeconomy as a whole (Braunstein 2021). To help Maine parents recover from the economic impact of COVID-19 and to better equip them to face future recessions, the state needs to make its childcare infrastructure more robust.

Policymakers can tackle the issue of child care for working parents from both the supply side and demand side. The Child Tax Credit payments offered one form of demand-side assistance: providing parents with monthly income helped some pay for child care and otherwise helped them meet basic needs when their work was disrupted by lapses in child care. Expanding the advanced Child Tax Credit payments at the state level may provide relief for families in

FIGURE 5: **Median Child Day Care Earnings as a Share of Overall Median Earnings, by Educational Attainment**



Note: Median monthly earnings from Quarter 1 of 2021. Sample limited to private sector employment in Maine.

Source: Author's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators.

Maine who continue to face hurtles in getting affordable child care. Maine is already on the right track in that it provides a childcare tax credit to qualified filers and is 1 of only 25 states to do so. According to the Maine Revenue Services, the credit is equal to 25 percent of the federal credit for child and dependent care expenses, but it doubles if the expenses are from a childcare provider who has a quality certificate issued by the Department of Health and Human Services. Though this credit is refundable up to $500, state lawmakers may wish to consider increasing the refundable amount to help families in the short term. In the longer term, the state should consider increasing the credit for all types of care providers, especially given recent declines in licensed childcare providers.

The state's current Child Care Subsidy program helps many working parents afford child care, and research has shown that similar subsidies are helpful in getting parents back to work or to higher-paying jobs (Blau and Tekin 2007; Ha and Miller 2015). Maine's existing program is commendable in several ways: for example, in its flexibility with providing a subsidy for families who use either licensed or unlicensed care providers. However, the state ought to reevaluate its income requirements for the program. For example, the current Child Care Subsidy program does not take into account that infant care is substantially more expensive than care for young children. According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI 2020), the average annual cost of infant care in Maine is $9,449 while child care for a four-year-old costs around $8,292. By their estimates, infant care for one child would take up 15.1 percent of median family income in Maine. For this reason, the state's Child Care Subsidy program should consider both the number of children and the ages of the children in a household in its eligibility requirements. The state may also wish to implement a waterfall subsidy program, whereby those earning slightly more than the income cutoff are slowly phased out of the program rather than abruptly expunged. Such a phaseout will help parents as they transition to higher-income employment.

From the supply side, Maine policymakers need to focus on boosting the childcare workforce. Maine lawmakers have recognized this need and recently passed legislation that sets the state on track to provide additional pay to childcare workers at $200 per month (Mistler 2022). However, this provision is temporary and ultimately may not provide a sufficient amount of funding to attract more childcare workers to the field.

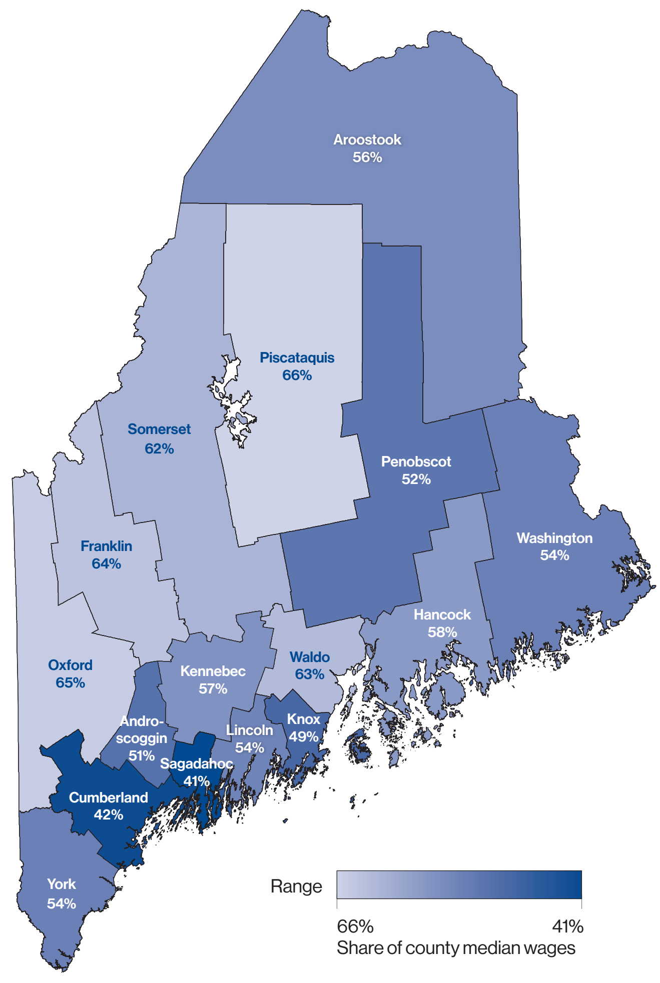
According to data from the Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators, child day care workers in Maine earned a median wage of $2,155 per month in the first quarter of 2021, while the median monthly wage of workers in all private industries was $4,374 (Figure 5). This means that, on average, childcare workers in Maine earned 49.3 percent of the average wage of other private sector workers in the state. This gap grows with education level: Maine child day care workers with a bachelor's degree earn, on average, 38 percent of other workers with the same level of education. Among workers with only a high school diploma, childcare workers earned 58 percent of the median overall wage. Further, the returns to education for a childcare worker are minimal. This gap is especially problematic given the well-documented returns to child welfare and care quality that come with caregivers improved educational attainment (Burchinal et al. 2002).

A $200 per month wage increase, as proposed under new state legislation, will certainly help caregivers, but it will not make childcare wages competitive with other jobs in the state, especially for those with bachelor's degree. The policy may also be ineffective in regions where the wage gap is particularly high. For instance, in Cumberland and Sagadahoc Counties (Figure 6), childcare workers earn just 42 percent and 41 percent of the median countywide wage, respectively. In Piscataquis, Oxford, and Franklin Counties, a $200 monthly wage boost will go further in closing the wage gap, but it is still not sufficient to make childcare wages competitive. The state should consider expanding the program with higher wage increases overall, with wage supplements that increase based on education level, and with higher wages in more expensive areas of the state.

Another step that may increase the supply of Maine's childcare workforce is to establish an employer childcare tax credit. Currently, several states provide tax credits designed to encourage employers to provide child care directly, contract with current providers for child care for their employees, or to otherwise help expand the supply of child care for their employees. This type of policy could be especially useful in Maine's rural communities, where childcare deserts are common, as well as for those working in industries that require evening or overnight work for childcare options are especially hard to find.

Ultimately, without continued efforts to improve the childcare landscape in Maine, many childcare providers will not be able to provide care and many families will face economic hardship. Data from this study imply that childcare availability suffered during the onset of COVID-19. The state's childcare crisis hurt Mainers' economically and affected their ability to work. Programs like the Child Tax Credit helped parents meet their basic needs during the pandemic, but long-term systemic solutions must be based on improving access to child care. Prioritizing the care economy in the next several decades will be pivotal to Maine's economic success and its ability to sustain a growing young population.

FIGURE 6: **Median Child Day Care Earnings as a Share of Overall Median Earnings, by County**



Note: Median monthly earnings from Quarter 1 of 2021. Sample limited to private sector employment in Maine.

Source: Author's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators.

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