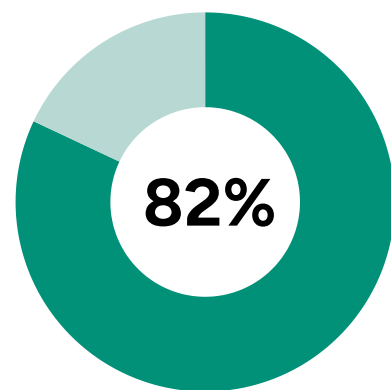


OVERVIEW

A new national survey finds that families see child care as a key driver of the nation's affordability challenges and believe policymakers should take action to make child care more accessible and affordable. The survey was conducted by Impact Research on behalf of the First Five Years Fund from July 6–12, 2026, surveying 1000N likely voters nationwide.

Voters are feeling strained by the cost of living and see child care costs as part of the problem.

- Two-thirds say cost of living is creating major or minor financial strains (69%), and nearly half say they have worried some or a lot in the past six months about affording the essentials (46%).
- More than 8 in 10 voters say the cost of child care is a part of the affordability crisis (82%). 3 in 4 see the cost of child care for families with young children as a crisis or major problem (76%).
- For parents who pay for child care, the costs of care are a major part of the problem. 38% list child care as one of the two biggest cost issues they face, right behind housing (56%) and groceries (40%).



say the cost of child care is a part of the affordability crisis

Child care challenges increasingly affect the ability of both parents and non-parents to participate in the workforce.

- Nearly 40% of all voters say their ability to work is affected by coworkers' child care challenges.
- 1 out of every 5 parents with young children say child care challenges frequently impact their ability to work.
- And almost 50% of parents who work say their ability to work is affected by child care challenges.

Parents need a wider range of child care options beyond family and friends.

- Only 6% of parents rely on family and friends for full-time child care, while well over half (58%) say they do not rely on family and friends for child care at all.
- Of those who don't rely on family or friends for child care, 58% say they don't want or need family or friends to provide care, while one in five (21%) say they do not have friends or family available to help.



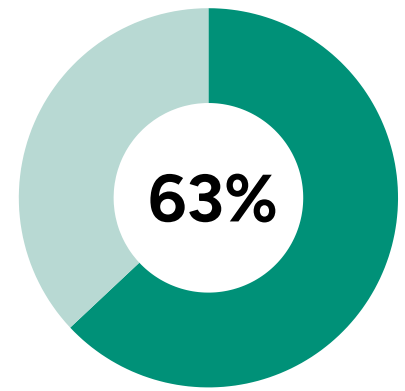
1 in 3 voters think that gridlock in Congress, rather than just one political party, is holding back progress on making child care more affordable.

Voters want Congress to work together to get something done.

- One in three voters think that gridlock in Congress, rather than just one political party, is holding back progress on making child care more affordable.
- Child care is one of the few issues where Democratic voters want their party to work with President Trump. Nearly 50% of Democratic voters think Democrats in Congress should work with Republicans and the President to pass child care legislation.

Voters support common-sense legislation like the bipartisan Child Care Modernization Act to build the supply of care and strengthen the existing child care system.

- The Child Care Modernization Act has strong bipartisan support with almost two-thirds of voters supporting the bill, and just one in five opposing (63% support / 21% oppose).
- Support for the legislation also translates into political support amongst voters who will be key to deciding the 2026 midterms: 57% of Independent women, 55% of Hispanic men, and 54% of young voters say they would be more likely to support an elected official who backs the Child Care Modernization Act.
- The most popular parts of the Child Care Modernization Act are expanding supply, cutting costs, and ensuring parental choice. Voters like the following policies in the bill the most:
 - Ensuring parents get to choose the child care that works best for families (83% of voters support)
 - Lowering the monthly cost of child care (73% of voter support)
 - Expanding the supply of child care (71% of voter support)



Almost two-thirds of voters support the Child Care Modernization Act

Our take:

“Child care is now competing with housing and groceries as one of the biggest strains on family budgets,” said FFYF Executive Director Sarah Rittling. “And nearly 40% of all voters say their own ability to work is affected by their coworkers’ child care challenges. Poll after poll has shown that affordability is top of mind for voters right now, and we’ve spent the past year hearing lots of child care ideas and proposals. But voters are telling us that in the midst of a hyperpolitical primary and midterm season, they aren’t thinking about politics at all; they just want relief from the costs squeezing their families. And voters overwhelmingly support proposals like the bipartisan Child Care Modernization Act, which is exactly the kind of common-sense solution that can deliver it.”

Learn more:

- [Explore past polling](#)
- [Dive deeper on child care affordability](#)
- [Learn about modernizing child care](#)

Contact FFYF

Sarah Rubinfeld
Managing Director
Government Relations
srubinfeld@ffyf.org

Jane Fillion
Press Secretary and Associate Director
Media & Public Affairs
jfillion@ffyf.org

Julia Cinquegrani
Manager
Government Relations
jcinquegrani@ffyf.org

About First Five Years Fund

The first five years last forever. At First Five Years Fund, we work to protect, prioritize, and build bipartisan support for quality child care and early learning programs at the federal level. Reliable, affordable, and high-quality early learning and child care can be transformative, not only enhancing a child's prospects for a brighter future but also bolstering working parents and fostering economic stability nationwide. Join us at www.ffyf.org.