

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT REPORT

Childcare



THIS IS A SECTION OF A LARGER REPORT. READ THE FULL REPORT AT [WOMENOUTOFWORK.CA](https://www.womenoutofwork.ca)



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The childcare sector is predominantly composed of women workers and has been heavily impacted by the pandemic. 79% of women working in childcare experienced a negative job impact, the second highest rate of all sectors that we analyzed.

Respondents were asked if they had considered changing their careers at any point during the pandemic, and childcare workers were the least likely to say yes of any sector (47% vs 61% for all respondents). In the qualitative sections of the survey, many childcare workers commented on the difficulty of wearing full PPE while caring for young children, and the lack of recognition they receive as essential workers.

SECTOR IMPACTS

In the January 2021 survey, 112 respondents indicated that their primary job is in childcare (7% of the overall responses).

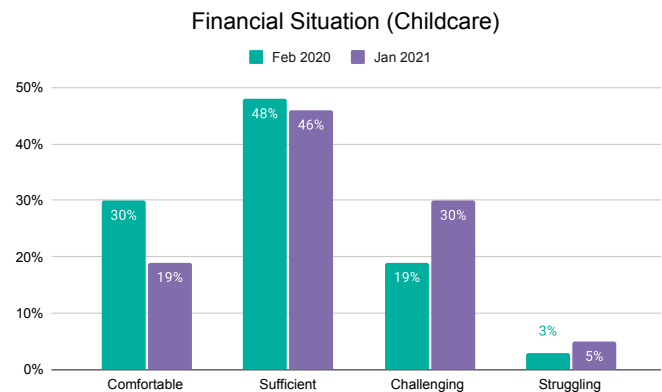
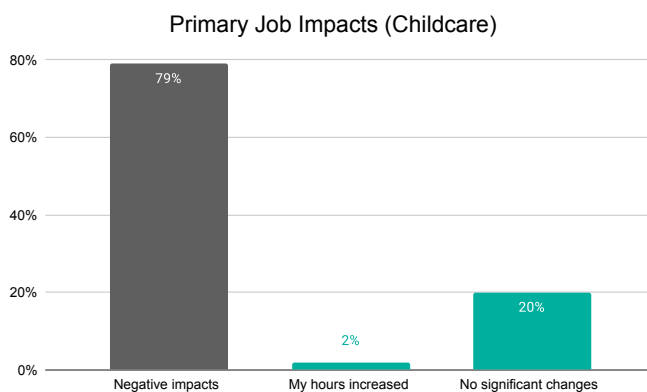
Prior to the pandemic:

- 70% of childcare workers stated that they worked full-time
- 24% worked part-time
- 31% indicated that they had access to benefits
- 32% indicated that they have access to paid sick time

69% of childcare workers indicated that their job does not allow them to work from home, while 28% indicated that they were required or given the option to work from home.

We found that 79% of childcare workers experienced a negative work impact due to the pandemic, second to the hospitality sector as the most negatively impacted workers in any group, as shown in the chart below.

Despite experiencing a high number of layoffs early in the pandemic, childcare workers did not see as large of a change in their financial situation as hospitality workers.



The childcare sector had the lowest percentage of respondents who indicated they had questioned changing careers during the pandemic, at 47% (compared to 61% for all respondents).

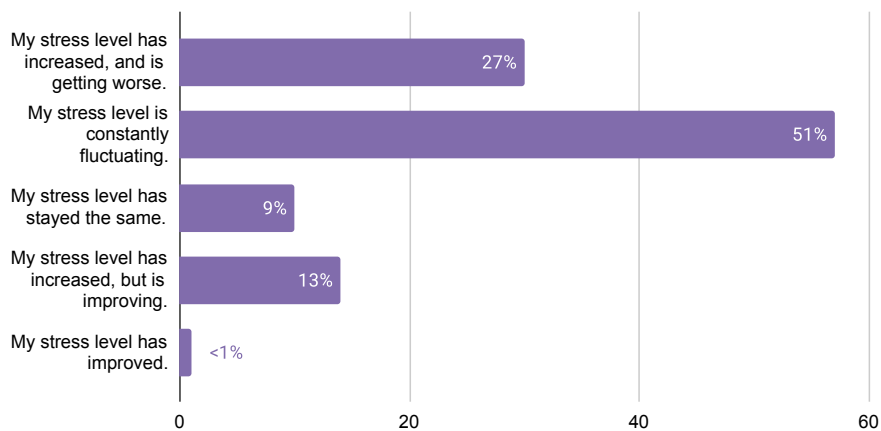
AT ANY POINT SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, HAVE YOU QUESTIONED:		
Retail	Yes	No
Changing your career?	47%	53%
Learning a new skill or trade?	47%	53%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to workplace health and safety concerns?	31%	69%
Reducing your hours or stopping working altogether due to childcare or increased domestic responsibilities?	24%	76%
Postponing a personal milestone (such as starting a family or buying a home)?	44%	56%

Very few workers in this group found a new job during the pandemic (5). Four out of five of them found a new job in the same sector, only one left the childcare industry.¹⁷

In terms of stress and mental health before the pandemic, workers in the childcare sector reported minimal (22%) or mild stress (41%) before the pandemic. A further 30% reported moderate stress and only 6% reported severe stress.

Stress levels increased significantly with the onset of COVID-19, as shown in the chart below.

Since COVID-19 began, how would you describe your average daily level of stress?



47% of women working in childcare had children under the age of 18 living at home, and among those women, 44% said they felt overwhelmed trying to balance work with caregiving responsibilities.

¹⁷ This is a small sample size, and results should be interpreted with caution.

In terms of financial concerns, in the childcare sector:

- 51% of respondents were concerned about unforeseen expenses due to COVID-19
- 33% were concerned about their ability to pay bills
- 30% were concerned about their ability to buy groceries
- 32% were worried about their ability to make rent or mortgage payments, and
- 23% were worried about lack of paid sick/caregiving days

Respondents were asked to comment on how their careers and lives were impacted by the pandemic, and many offered stories and insights on their experiences.

- “With schools closed there is no childcare available for my kids. I work in childcare and am a single parent therefore having to rely on family members to help with schooling while I work.”
- “Working with children in a mask and goggles is very draining. No parent involvement for a co-op preschool is definitely a challenge. Cleaning constantly on top of spending time/teaching/caring for the children is very much a difficult tiring task. Plus 1 hour cleaning at end of program each day.”
- “I work in childcare and the government has shown no respect or support for the work we do. We put ourselves at risk everyday and even though we are considered an essential service there has been no recognition for the hard work we do.”
- “Negatively, tough to support children in ways they may need emotionally and intellectually. Tough to exert a lot of energy while wearing all the PPE required”.
- “There have been both positive and negative impacts of COVID on my job. The negative include a constant worry about catching COVID from a child or co-worker who may bring it to the daycare. I fear bringing COVID home to my parents who are 77 and 68. I also feel anxious about not performing new public health protocols properly and endangering others at work. One positive has been a newfound respect for having a job during a crisis and for a time numbers within our child care centre allowed for smaller groups and more one on one relationship building.”
- “The field of ECE is not being supported or acknowledged enough. It is hard to follow added regulations with no extra staffing, funding, hazard pay, or regard for employees well-being.”
- “We are working with full PPE that doesn’t protect us because the children do not wear it. With public health regulations we are underpaid janitors with a sprinkle of childcare but are still being held to the same standard of care which is impossible at full ratios.”

“The government has shown no respect or support for the work we do. We put ourselves at risk everyday and even though we are considered an essential service there has been no recognition for the hard work we do.”