

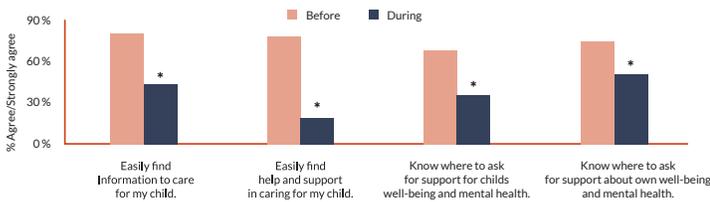
# Caring for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers During COVID-19

Over 2,000 families across Canada shared their struggles

## Increased expectations and lack of information and support

Results from a national survey that asked caregivers about the impact of COVID-19 revealed that families struggled with finding information and support to care for their young children during the pandemic, and frequently had to cope with unrealistic expectations of working and providing care for their children while their formal and informal supports were no longer accessible. In many instances, the absence of these supports was a major source of stress for families of very young children.

**Accessing Information and Support Prior to and During COVID-19 Pandemic**



*"I found the lack of daycare while working from home full time was not sustainable for my health and well-being."*

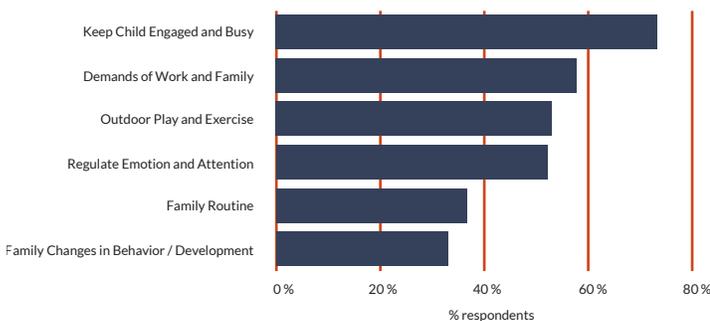
*"It is challenging and unrealistic to ask a parent to choose to work, care for a child, educate them and care for them all at the same time."*

*"The effect of loss of childcare options is affecting my psychological wellness and the financial stability of our future, as I am now unable to go to work."*

## Unanswered concerns for child development

Over 75% of respondents identified at least 3 topic areas where more information would have helped them better cope with the disruptions caused by the pandemic. In addition, many caregivers expressed deep concern about their young child's development and well-being and the lack of information about long-term consequences. Moreover, many caregivers reported being worried about how their own mental health issues might be affecting their child's development.

**Main topics where more information would have been helpful during the pandemic**



*"My biggest concerns are the detrimental developmental implications that my child will experience due to a lack of interaction with other children in a "normal" and frequent enough manner; I worry that this will also impact their mental health."*

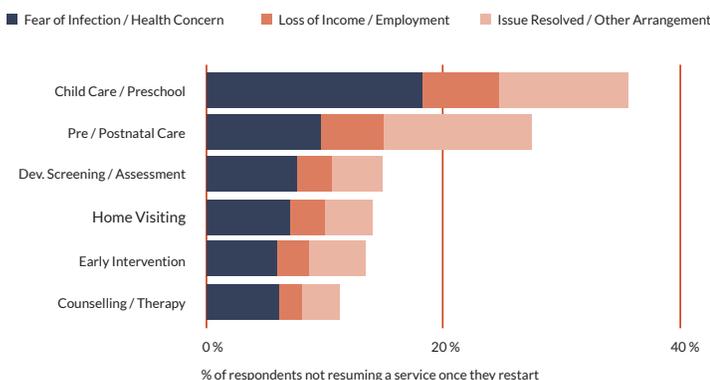
*"The lack of resources and consideration for young children and their caregivers has been extremely difficult for both, and I worry the impact will be felt long after the pandemic ends."*

*"Already-lengthy wait times for assessments and therapy have been exacerbated by the demands of the pandemic - and, while understandable, this still makes it very difficult to effectively assess, address, and fulfil my children's needs, especially when those needs are atypical."*

## Reluctance to resume services

At least 30% of respondents indicated that they do not intend to resume crucial services for their young child's development and mental health once these services resume. Among these families, many report difficulties making an informed decision because of the lack of targeted information about COVID-19 risks versus the benefits of the service. Indeed, close to 20% of respondents felt that they would not resume childcare services because of risk of infection. Of particular concern, many pregnant families indicated that they intend to stay away from pre/post-natal care for the same reasons.

**Why Families Are Reluctant To Resume Services**



*"There is minimal information outlining impacts the virus has on this age group. We're stuck between the threshold of what is safe enough for my child to explore and play with, and when to refrain from certain play, locations etc."*

*"I just need more support for my child's care (I have family support, but we're all burnt out at this point), and there aren't any options that don't involve a significant risk of infection."*

*"I have found balancing work and childcare very hard and wish that my work was more flexible. Also feel very nervous now that things are opened up and I feel 'forced' to send my child back into care because my work wants more of my time."*