

Minnesota KinderCare Confidence Index: Working Dads & Workforce Impact

Top Takeaways

- **Child care access drives workforce decisions:** 66% of Minnesota dads are actively looking for a new job with better child care benefits.
- **Minnesota parents feel the strain more than the U.S.:** Across all major measures, Minnesota parents report higher rates of job changes and reduced work due to child care challenges.
- **Parents are willing to trade pay for reliability:** 77% of dads would take a pay cut to access quality child care.
- **Gaps in employer support remain:** Nearly 1 in 4 employers offer no comprehensive child care benefits.
- **Lack of awareness limits impact:** 68% of dads say child care benefits are difficult to understand.

Workforce Impact: Career Decisions Are Driven by Child Care Access

Child care challenges are directly reshaping how Minnesota parents engage in the workforce.

Career Tradeoffs Driven by Child Care

Impact	Minnesota	U.S.
Switched/considered switching jobs	72%	64%
Scaled back hours	71%	65%
Taken/considered less demanding roles	70%	64%

Key Insight: Minnesota parents are consistently more likely than the national average to make career changes due to child care challenges.

Working Dads Feel the Pressure Most

- 66% are actively job hunting for better child care benefits
- 77% would take a pay cut for reliable care
- 70% are concerned benefits may be reduced
- 68% say benefits are difficult to understand

Parent Perspective: “If I knew I would always have quality child care coverage, I would be able to be more present as a parent when I am with my kids” (77%)

Access and Affordability Gaps Persist

Despite demand, many families struggle to secure consistent, high-quality care.

- 64% have compromised on quality due to cost or access
- 65% say it is difficult to find quality care for children under age 5

Parent Perspective: “I’ve had to compromise on the quality of child care due to affordability or access” (64%)

Employer Benefits: Progress with Gaps

Minnesota employers are ahead of the national average in some areas, but gaps remain.

Child Care Benefits Offered

Benefit Type	Minnesota	U.S.
On-demand/emergency child care	44%	38%
Tax credits	34%	25%
Subsidized child care	23%	25%
On-site child care	18%	17%
None of the above	23%	33%

Key Insight: While Minnesota leads in access to certain benefits, nearly a quarter of employers offer no comprehensive support.

Parents Are Bracing for Benefit Cuts

Many working parents expect employer support to decline.

- 50% expect decreased child care benefits
- 61% worry their employer will scale back benefits to cut costs

Groups most concerned:

- Dads
- Remote workers
- Millennials

Awareness and Understanding Are Low

Even when benefits exist, many parents struggle to access or understand them.

- 73% say employers promote benefits but rarely highlight support for working parents
- 61% say child care benefits are difficult to understand (68% dads)

Business Impact: Productivity and Retention

Child care challenges are directly affecting employee performance and loyalty.

- 82% say reliable child care is critical to their productivity
- 76% say better employer support would increase loyalty

Key Insight: Child care is not just a family issue. It is a workforce stability issue.

KinderCare Perspective

KinderCare partners with employers across Minnesota and nationwide to provide flexible, scalable child care solutions. These solutions help reduce workforce disruption, improve employee retention, and support working families with reliable, high-quality care.

Bottom Line

Unreliable child care is reshaping the workforce in Minnesota. Parents are making career tradeoffs, employers face retention challenges, and demand for accessible, high-quality child care continues to grow. Organizations that invest in meaningful child care solutions have a clear opportunity to strengthen their workforce and better support working families.