



**KINDERCARE**  
LEARNING COMPANIES™

# KinderCare Parent Confidence Index

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2026

# Methodology

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This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of KinderCare from November 5, 2025, to November 13, 2025, among 2,509 parents with children age 12 and younger. Within the sample we surveyed 1,056 parents with children age 5 and under, and 1,453 with children age 6-12. The presentation represents national sample; we then looked at the data cut by the following demographics: age, race/ethnicity, gender, income, region, and employment status. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

^ indicates a statistically significant difference among waves of the study

# Who did we talk to?

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## Race/ethnicity

- Black (n=518)
- White (n=1,406)
- Hispanic (n=428)
- Asian (n=76)
- BIPOC (n=1,103)

## Gender

- Women (n=1,353)
- Men (n=1,105)
- Other/prefer not to say (n=51)

## Industry

- Education (n=188)
- Finance (n=174)
- Healthcare (n=292)
- Tech (n=305)
- Academia (n=9)
- Other industry (n=1,036)

## Generation

- Gen Z (n=340)
- Millennial (n=1,556)
- Gen X (n=556)
- Boomer+ (n=57)

## Work status

- Working parents (n=2,004)
- Not working parents (n=505)

## Work environment

- Remote (n=485)
- Hybrid (n=603)
- Office (n=888)

## Child(ren) Age

- Young Children (0-5) (n=1,056)
- Older Children (5+) (n=1,453)

## Current primary childcare

- Daycare/preschool (n=631)
- Nanny (n=338)
- Stay at home parent (n=911)
- Work from home parent (n=605)
- Family/friends (n=936)
- After school programs (n=741)

## Income

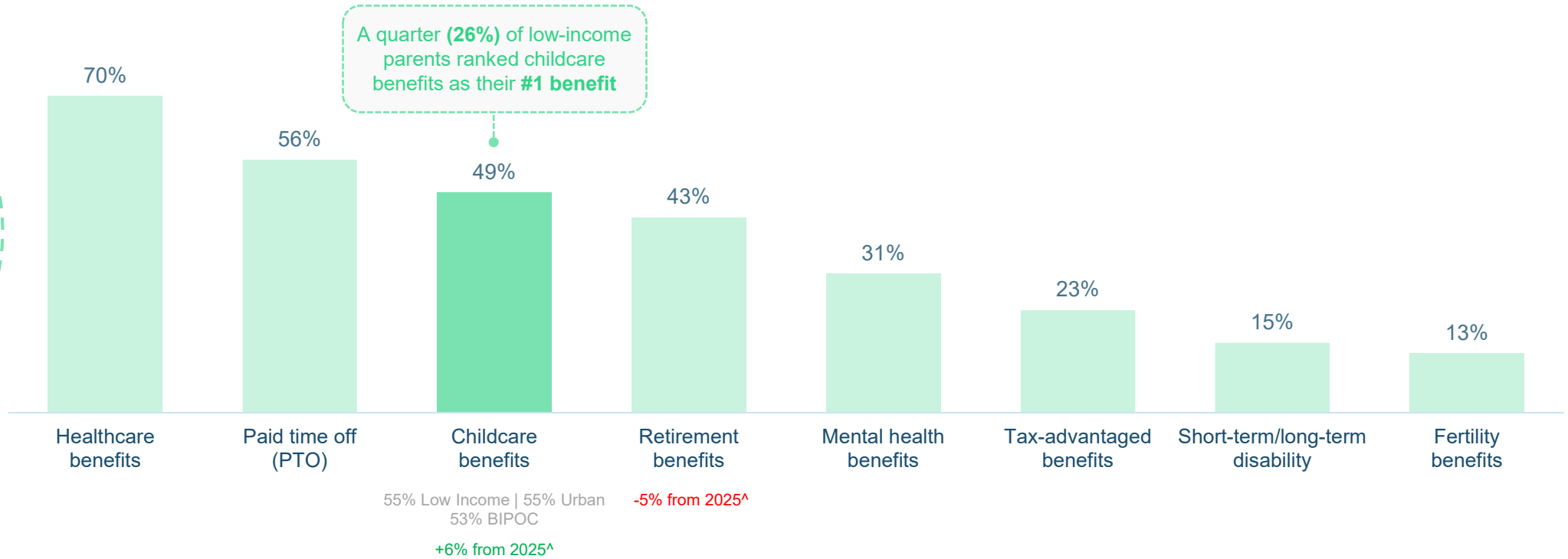
- Low Income (<\$40K) (n=521)
- Middle Income (\$40K-\$99.99K) (n=1,139)
- High Income (\$100K+) (n=849)



# New Shift: Parents now rank childcare benefits above retirement perks

## Most important benefits in considering staying at current job

(% Selected Top 3)



**85%** agree, “Childcare benefits should be considered as essential as health or retirement benefits”

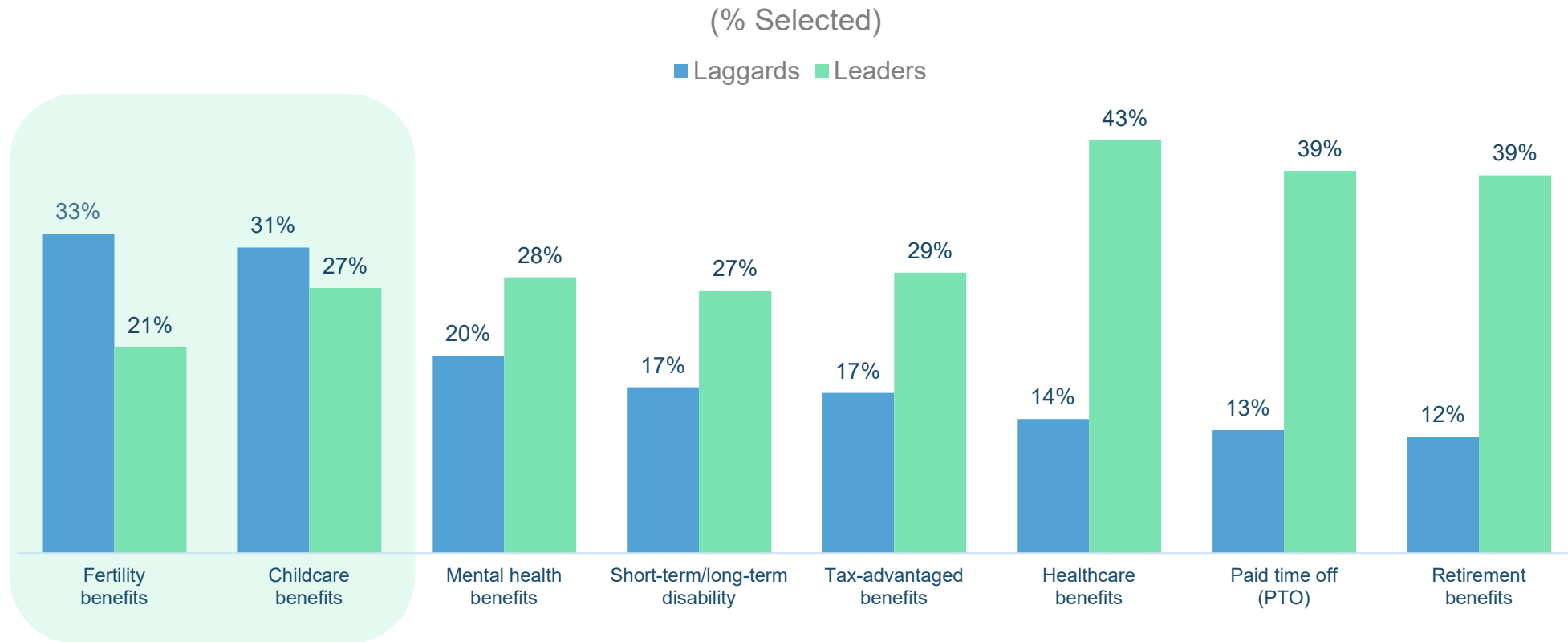
Q102: When considering staying at your current job, how important are the following benefits in your consideration process? (n=2,004 employed) (Top 3 Ranking: 1-3)  
Q16a: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (T2B: Somewhat / Strongly Agree) (n=2,004 employed)

\*No significant YoY changes from 2025



# Working parents say their company is lagging in both fertility and childcare benefits

When thinking about the category of benefits below, how would you best describe your company's relationship with these benefit categories?



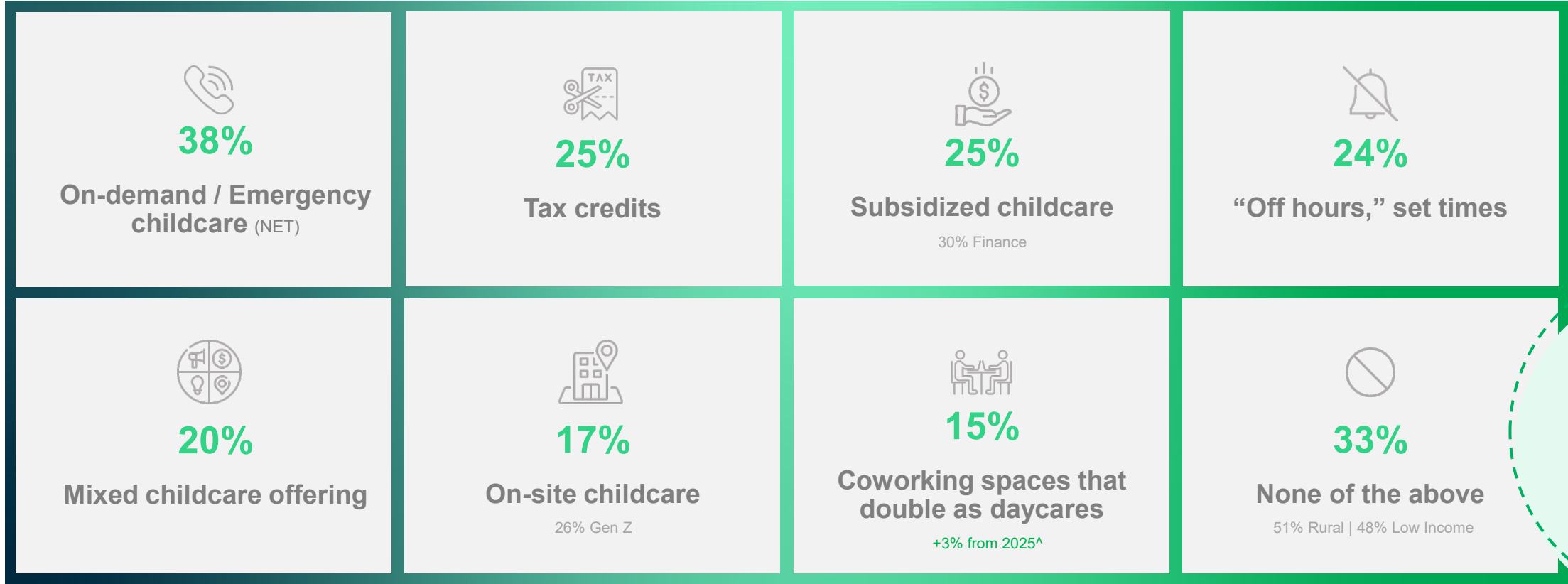
\*No significant YoY changes from 2025

Q104: When thinking about the category of benefits below, how would you best describe your company's offering along these benefit categories? (n=2,004 employed) YOY



# Currently, few employers offer childcare benefits with 1 in 3 offering zero benefits

## Employer offered childcare benefits



**1 in 3** employers offer **zero** childcare benefits

Q103: Which childcare policies or benefits does your current employer offer? Please select all that apply. (n=2,004 employed)

\*No significant YoY changes from 2025  
\*Tech and Urban over-indexed across most childcare offerings



## Parents feel childcare benefits lack transparency or are overlooked



**71%** say their company constantly promotes its benefits, but **rarely highlights support for working parents**



**69%** agree,

“When I interview for a job, I consider it a **red flag if they don't talk about how they support parents**”



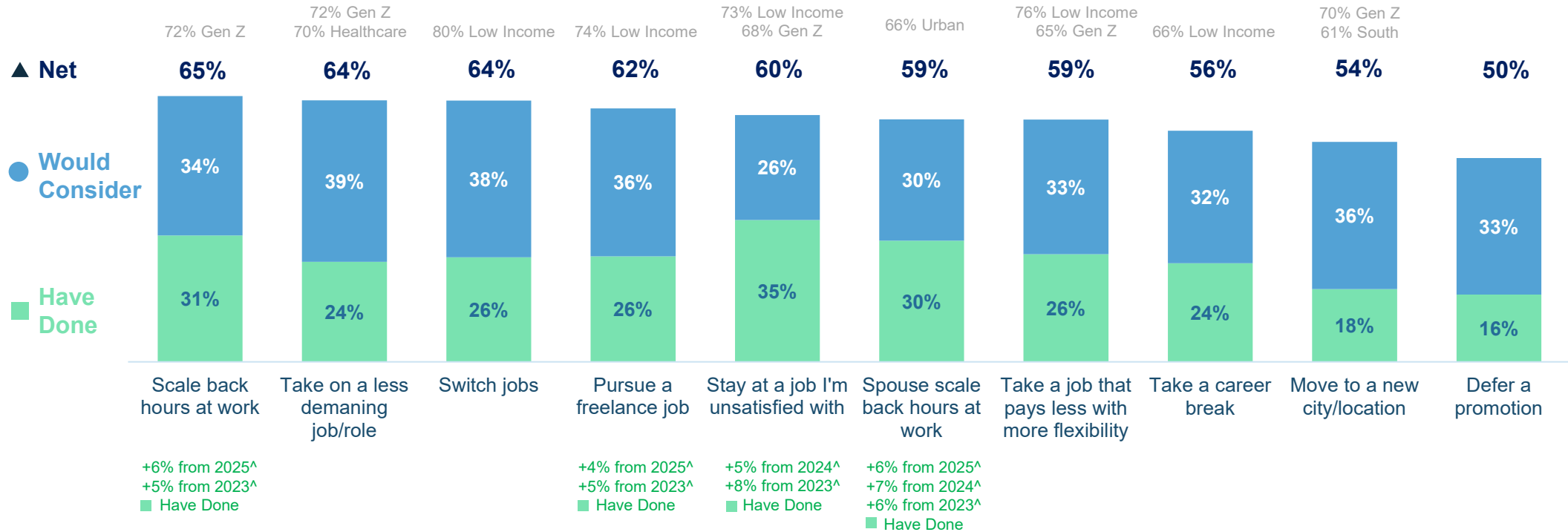
**53%** agree,

“It's **difficult to understand my current childcare benefits**”

# Parents already have or are preparing to make career sacrifices to care for their children, especially low-income and Gen Z parents

Have you ever or would you consider doing any of the following because it is too difficult or expensive to find childcare?

(% Selected)



Q10a. Have you ever or would you consider doing any of the following because it is too difficult or expensive to find childcare? (n=1,872 employed) YOY





# The parent exodus: 72% know someone who left work due to childcare crisis



**72%** agree,

“Many parents I know are leaving the **workforce** because childcare has become too hard to manage”

80% Low Income



**60%** agree,

“I am worried that I will have to **step back from my career** to take on my parenting responsibilities”

+7% from 2025^  
+19% from 2024^  
+13% from 2023^



**54%** agree,

“I’m **actively looking for a new job** with better childcare benefits”

62% Urban | 58% BIPOC  
58% South

+4% from 2025^

Q19: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (T2B: Somewhat / Strongly Agree) (n=2,004 employed)

# Over a quarter of working parents don't have an emergency or backup option if their primary childcare isn't available

Levels of stress / disruption to work to find care in the following situations

(Top 2 Box)

■ Somewhat / very stressful to find care    ■ Somewhat / very disruptive to your work to find care

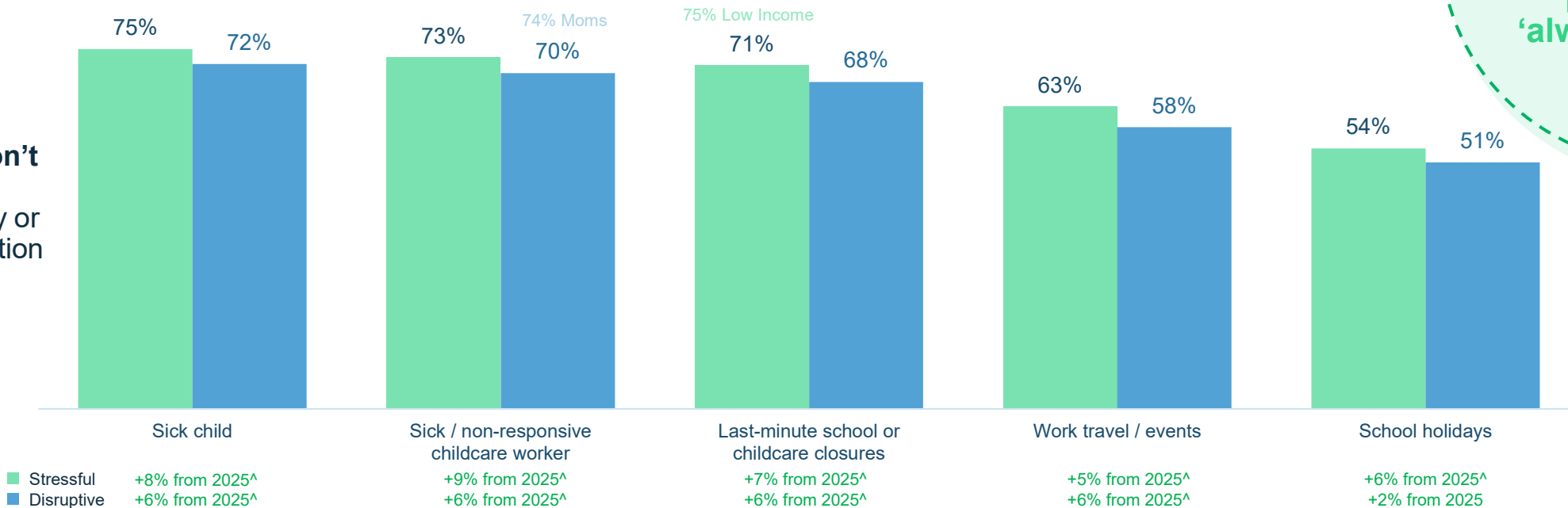


**28%**

of working parents **don't** have an emergency or backup option

39% Low Income  
34% Moms

+5% from 2024<sup>^</sup>  
+7% from 2023<sup>^</sup>



**74%** agree, "Even with flexible work, I feel pressure to be 'always available' for my job"

Q106: How stressful is it to find childcare in the following situations? (n=2,004 employed) YOY | Q107: How disruptive is it to your work to find childcare in the following situations? (n=2,004 employed) YOY  
 Q14: If your primary form of childcare wasn't available, would you have an emergency or backup option? (n=2,004 employed) YOY  
 Q19: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (T2B: Somewhat / Strongly Agree) (n=2,004 employed)



# And companies' bottom lines are impacted by lack of childcare support



**81% agree,**

“I wish my employer understood that reliable childcare is key to my productivity as an employee”

89% Finance



**79% agree,**

“If my employer supported me better as a parent, I would be **more loyal to my company**”

87% Tech | 85% Urban



**66% agree,**

“Unreliable childcare has **negatively impacted my work performance** in the past”

**Parents admit:**  
(% Selected)

I've had to miss work **50%**

59% Low Income  
57% Rural | 54% Moms  
+7% from 2025^

I've had to reduce my hours at work **35%**

45% Low Income  
40% Gen Z  
+7% from 2025^

I've experienced tension with my manager **28%**

I've considered quitting or have quit my job **27%**

I've experienced tension with my coworkers **24%**

Q112: Which of the following have you experienced due to a lack of reliable childcare, if any? (n=2,004 employed)

Q19: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (T2B: Somewhat / Strongly Agree) (n=2,004 employed)



# Top barriers include understanding qualification requirements and time



**90% agree,**  
 “Programs that help families afford childcare **should be easier to access and understand**”

## Top barriers to seeking govt assistance: (% Selected)

#1	Didn't know if I qualified for government assistance	<b>42%</b>
#2	Time (e.g., took too much time to apply, etc.)	<b>26%</b> <small>37% Hispanic        +7% from 2025^</small>
#3	Paperwork (e.g., confusing, time-consuming, etc.)	<b>22%</b> <small>+7% from 2025^</small>
#4	Assistance programs are not flexible enough for my needs	<b>22%</b> <small>33% Gen Z        29% Low Income        +5% from 2025^</small>
#5	I could not find any childcare programs that would take my government vouchers / assistance	<b>14%</b> <small>23% Low Income        +3% from 2025^</small>
#6	Fear of judgment from others	<b>12%</b>

Q111: Which of the following barriers have you experienced or have prevented you from seeking out government assistance for childcare? (n=1,538 have not sought out govt assistance) YOY  
 Q114: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (T2B: Somewhat / Strongly Agree) (n=2,509)

