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# KinderCare Confidence Index

2024

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# Background

- KinderCare partnered with Harris Poll to identify factors impacting parent confidence today
- We surveyed more than 2,000 U.S. parents with children under age 12
- Five years in, the survey continues to shine new light on how parents are feeling today and on the importance role access to high-quality child care plays in parent confidence



# Key Takeaways

## Parent confidence

- Five years in, parent confidence remains high

## Child care is a must-have benefit, especially with the return to office

- Child care benefits are among the top reasons parents stay at their job, and are increasingly important when employers mandate a return to the office
- Gen Z says child care is their top desired benefit

## Consistent, high-quality child care improves parents' mental health

- Parents are anxious about rising child care costs, and those without consistent access find it increasingly hard to secure child care in their communities

## Parents see impact of high-quality child care programs on children

- Children show improvement in a variety of areas, including social emotional skills and language and literacy



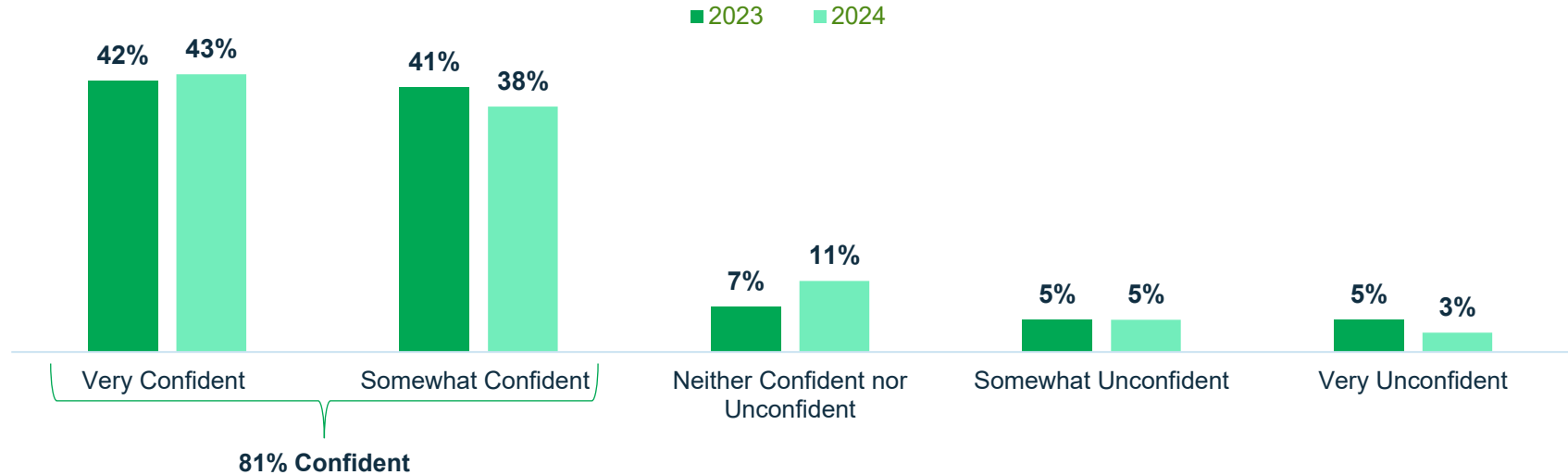
# The State of Parent Confidence 2024

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# Parents' confidence remains high

How would you rate your level of confidence when it comes to parenting on a typical day?



# Parents who use child care are especially confident

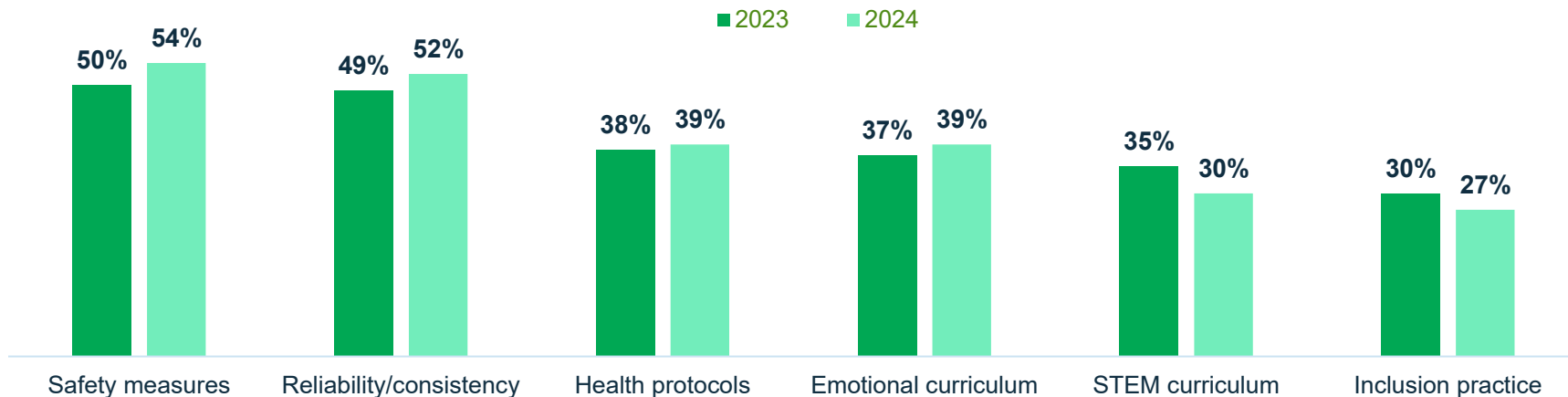
73%

Of parents who use child care feel highly confident in themselves on a typical day

For working parents, being employed full-time gives a significant boost to self-confidence (**79%** Full-Time vs. **64%** Part-Time)



# Safety remains the top factor in choosing child care



# However, finding child care remains a challenge



23%

don't have an emergency or  
back-up option if their  
primary form of child care  
isn't available

48%

say finding child care feels  
impossible right now

60%

believe it's becoming  
increasingly hard to secure  
high-quality child care in  
their community



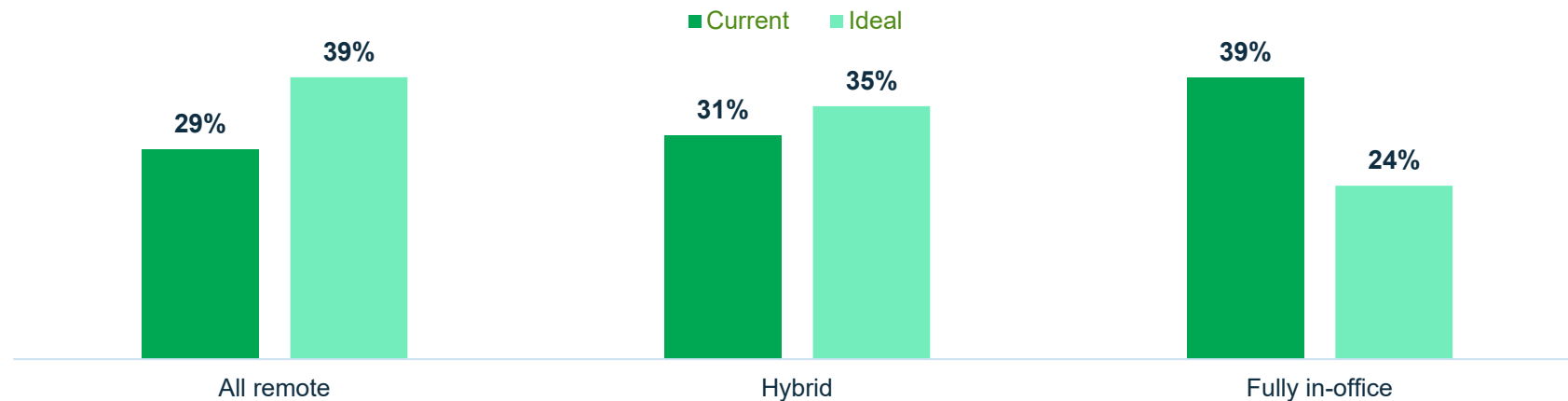
# Parent Confidence & The Future of Work

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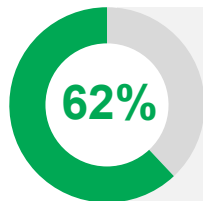


# Parents prefer remote or hybrid work, despite RTO push

Which of the following best describes your current and ideal work environment?



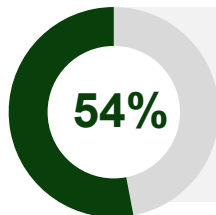
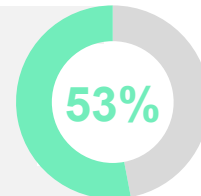
# With RTO, parents expect child care support



Feel that when employers force parents to return to office (full time or most of the time), it shows they don't get what parents' lives are really like



Feel that in-office work has or will change their child care needs

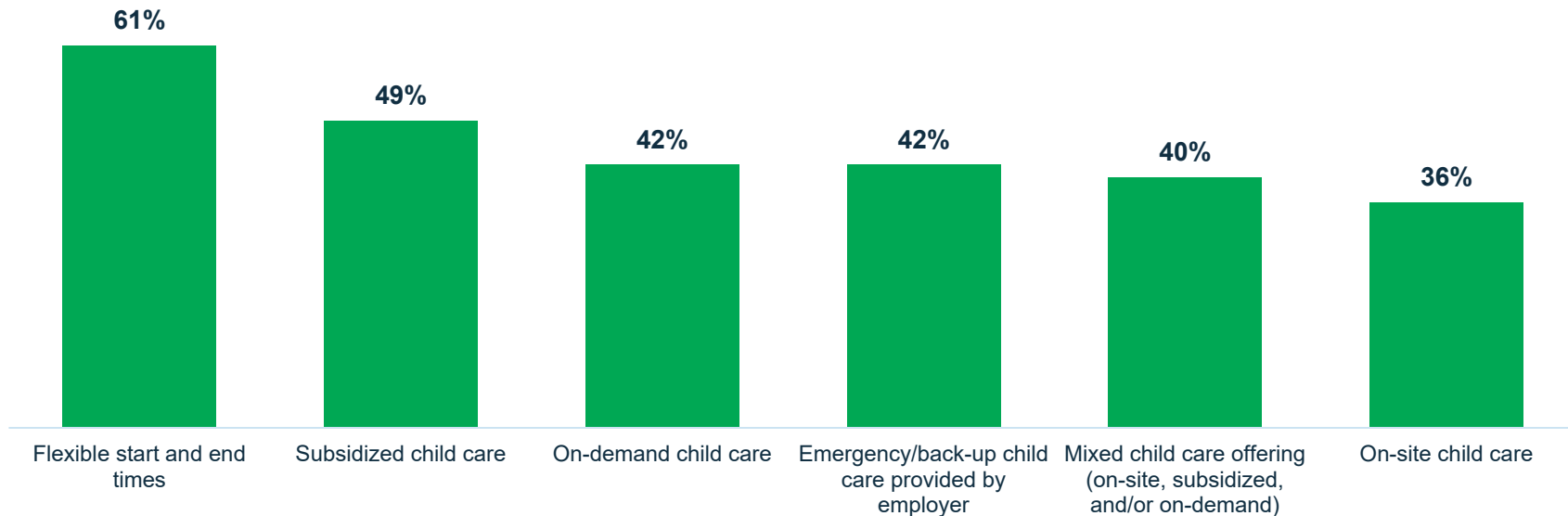


Expect their company to offset the burden of child care costs as they return to the office

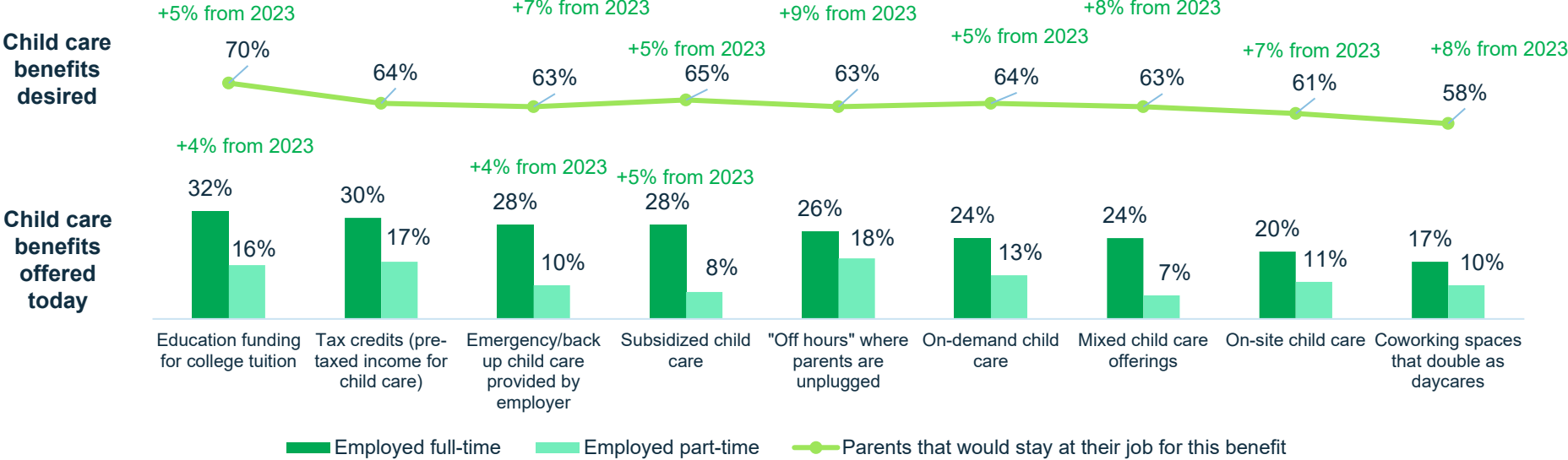


# Parents want flexibility and child care options as they return to work

Percentage of parents who want child care benefits provided by employer upon return to office

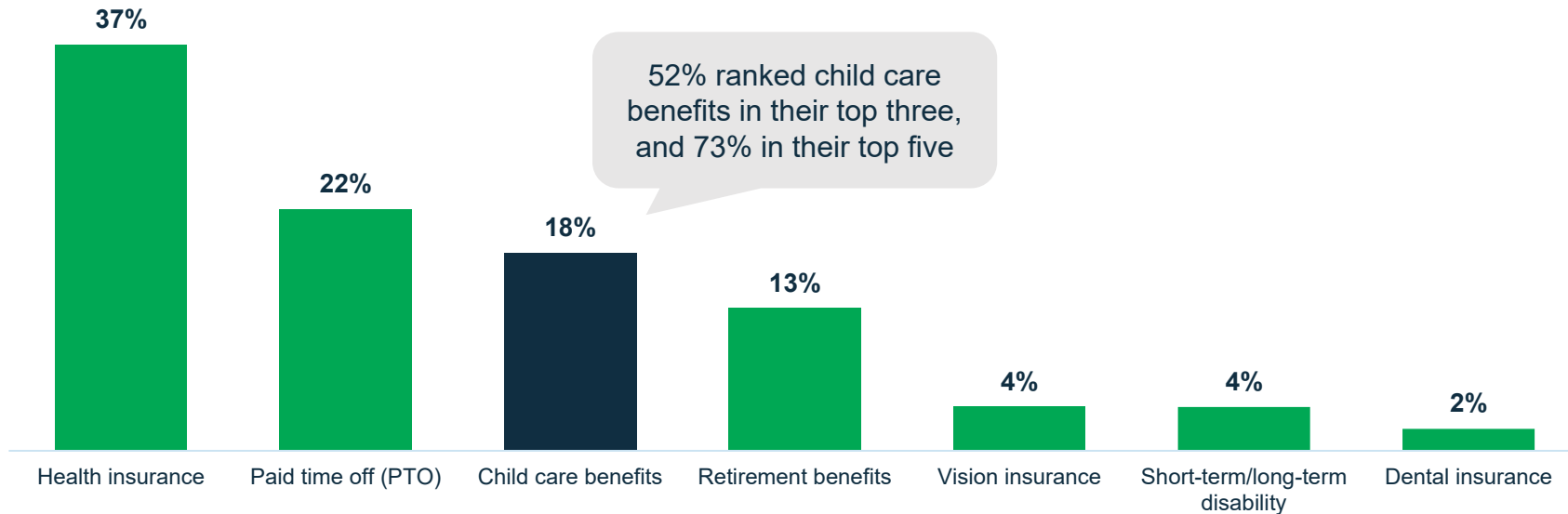


# There is a gap between child care benefits working parents receive and what they want



# Child care benefits are retention benefits

Percentage of parents who ranked benefits the most important in staying at current job



# Parents believe employers should offset child care costs

64%



believe employers should offset the cost of childcare for their employees

49%



would rather their employer subsidize their child care costs than get a raise

44%



believe that current employer-provided child care benefits (e.g., HSAs, vouchers) are more difficult to use than health benefits





## Parents would take a pay cut for child care benefits

57%

would take a pay cut to work  
for a company that provided  
child care benefits



# Child care is also key to attracting new talent



74%

say how a company  
supports its employees who  
are parents reflects how it  
cares for its employee  
overall



51%

believe that when they  
interview for a job, they  
consider it a red flag if  
employers don't talk about  
how they support parents



43%

say they won't even  
consider a job offer if child  
care support isn't discussed

+6% from 2023

# Child care helps parents excel in their careers

72%

say that if they knew they would always have quality child care coverage, they would be able to focus better on their work

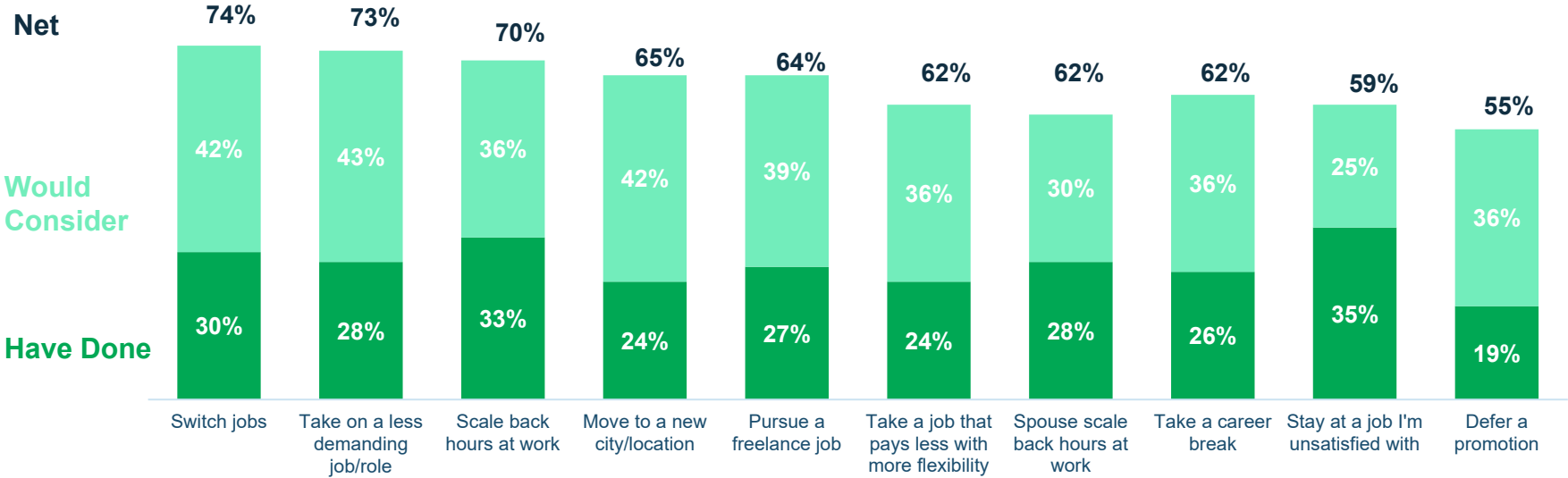
+7% from 2023

78%

say being confident in child care allows them to excel at work

# Parents continue to adapt their careers to be more available for their children

Have you ever or would you consider doing any of the following to be more available for your child?



# Parents' Confidence in Children's Development

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# Parents notice impact of high-quality child care

What differences have you noticed in your child(ren) since they enrolled in care?



Social-emotional skills

**58%**



Language & literacy skills

**56%**



Creative expression skills

**53%**



Cognitive skills

**50%**



Executive function skills

**46%**



Physical & motor skills

**41%**

# Parents value kindness and cross-cultural understanding



**84%** believe it's important that children learn to treat others the way they want to be treated



**83%** believe kindness should be a core value in the way we educate children



**81%** believe it's important that their children learn and play with children from different backgrounds than theirs

# Parents' Confidence & Parent Mental Health

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# Lack of child care a significant source of stress for parents



71%

believe being a parent means constantly thinking about child care gaps



65%

believe that if they had consistent access to high-quality child care coverage, they would be able to be more present as a parent with their children



55%

said that piecing together enough child care coverage is a significant source of stress



# Parents need a break

62%

Feel that the burden on parents with young children doesn't get as much attention as it deserves



Feel like they never get a break from parenting

51%

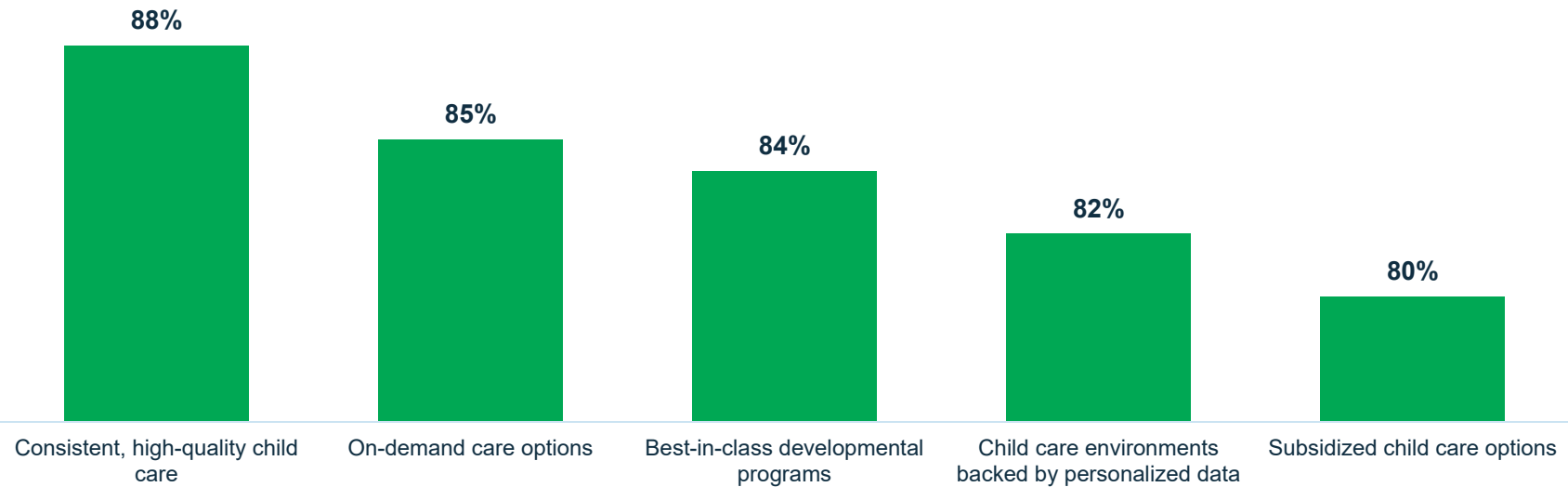
41%

Feel burnt out by constantly assessing what's best for their children



# Consistent, high-quality child care #1 improver of parent's mental health

Percentage of parents who said the following would improve their mental health

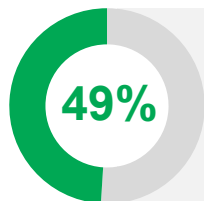


# Gen Z Parent Snapshot

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# With RTO, parents expect child care support



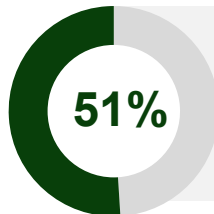
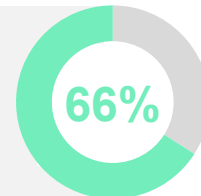
Currently have or anticipate experiencing decreased child care benefits

Versus 37% of Millennials and 31% of Gen X



“Piecing together enough child care coverage is a significant source of stress for me.”

Versus 29% of Millennials and 47% of Gen X



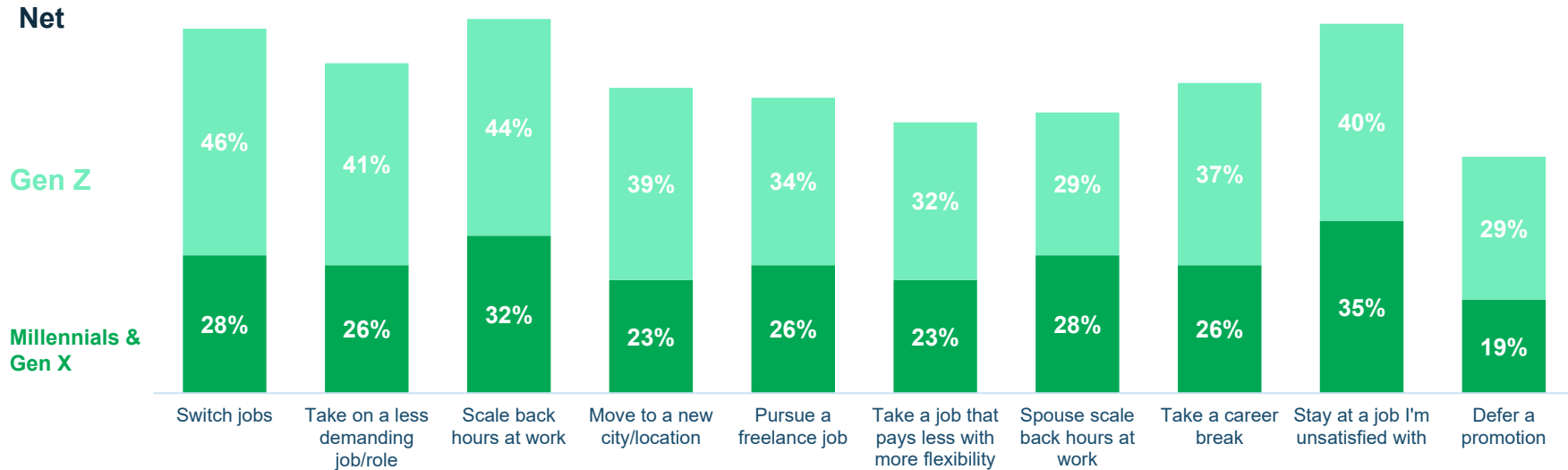
“I am worried that I will have to step back from my career to take on my parenting responsibilities.”

Versus 43% of Millennials and 35% of Gen X



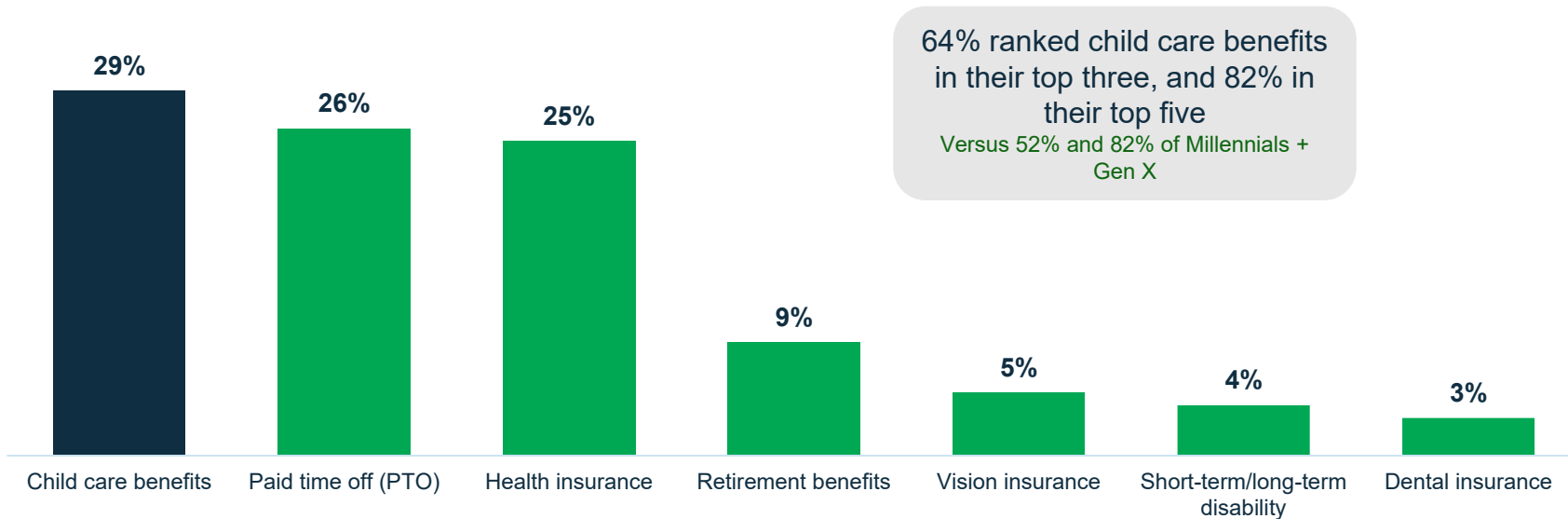
# Gen Z parents adapt their careers to be more available for their children

Have you ever done any of the following to be more available for your child?



# Child care benefits are retention benefits

Percentage of parents who ranked benefits the most important in staying at current job



# Child care costs directly impact Gen Z's careers, family planning

67%



"I know someone (or myself) who wishes they could be in the workforce, but the cost of child care makes it too difficult."

Versus 61% of Millennials and 56% of Gen X

54%



"The cost of child care is one of the main reasons I have chosen not to have more kids."

Versus 48% of Millennials and 42% of Gen X

52%



"I don't feel like my family can afford child care right now."

Versus 49% of Millennials and 42% of Gen X



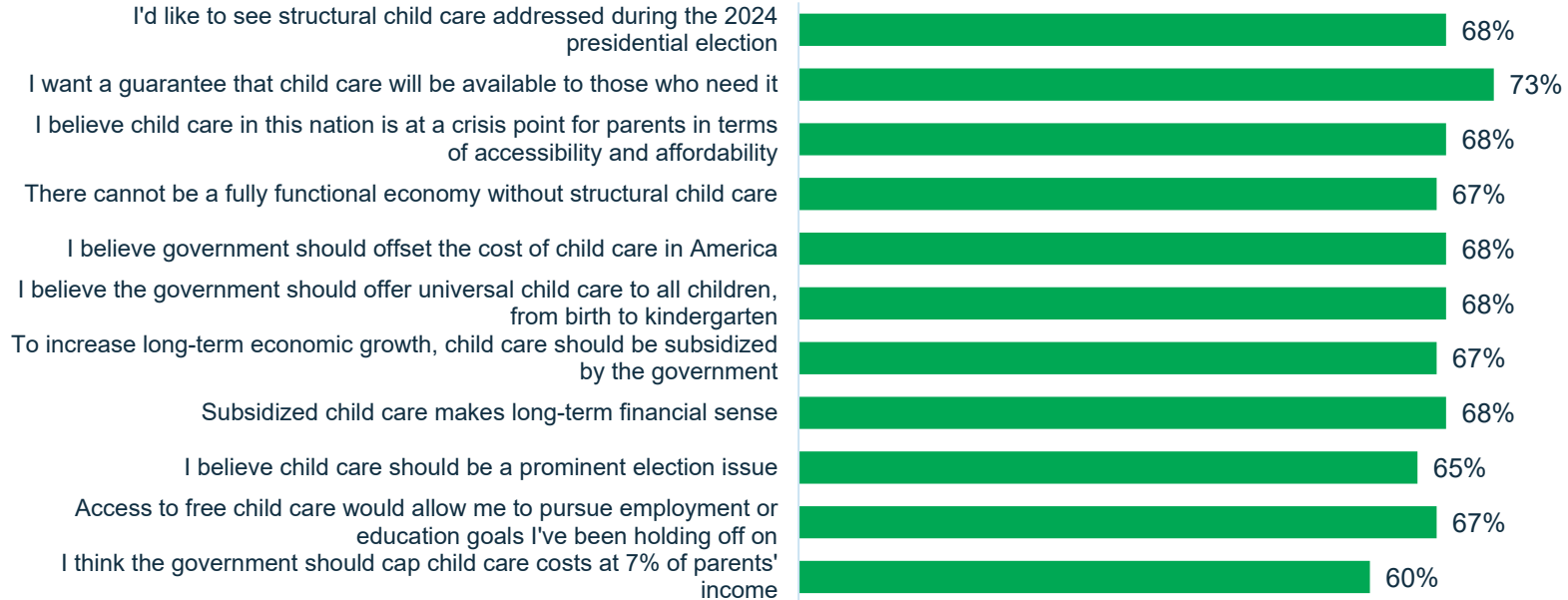
# Parents' Expectations of Government

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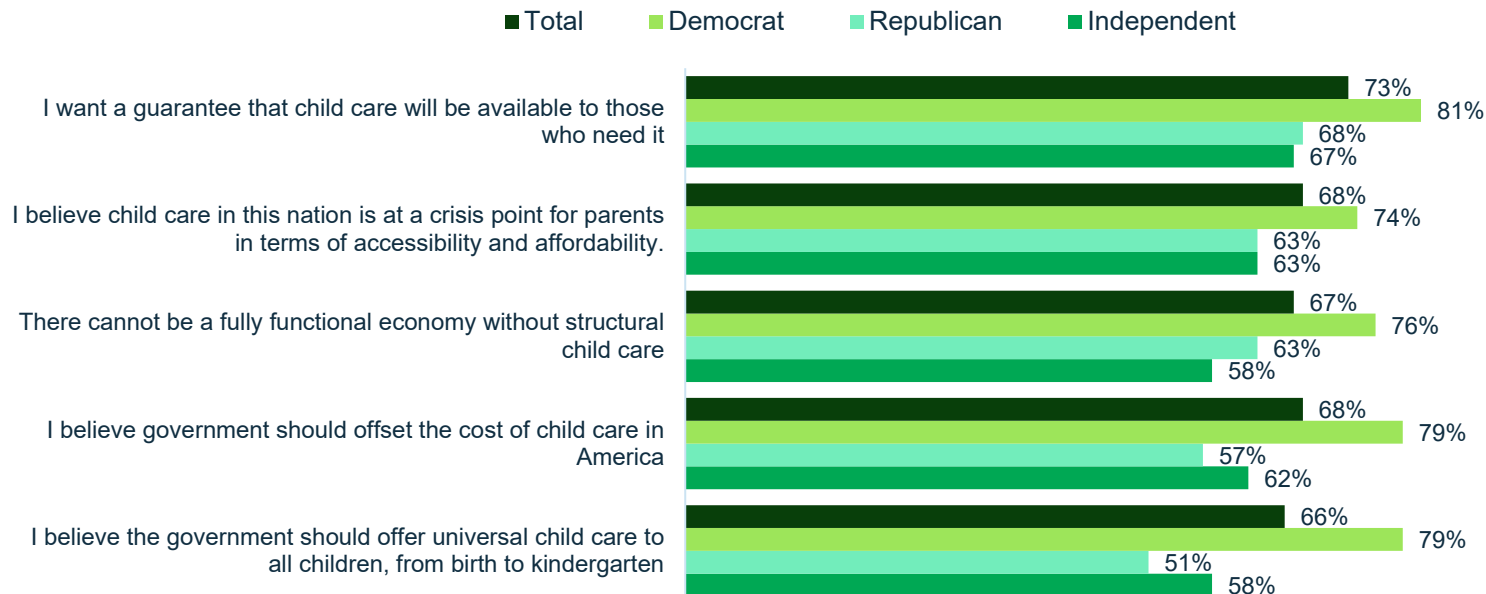




# Parents want the government to offset child care costs



# Affordable, accessible child care is a top concern, regardless of political affiliation



# Appendix

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# Methodology

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This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of KinderCare from November 3, 2023, to November 15, 2023, among 2,004 parents with children age 12 and younger. Within the sample we surveyed 1,177 parents with children age 5 and under, and 827 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

\* indicates that the sample is < n =100

# Who did we talk to?

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## Race/ethnicity

- Black (n=305)
- White (n=1,231)
- Hispanic (n=313)
- Asian (n=77)
- BIPOC (n=773)

## Generation

- Gen Z (n=440)
- Millennial (n=1033)
- Gen X (n=444)
- Boomer (n=87)

## Industry

- Education (n=157)
- Finance (n=119)
- Healthcare (n=223)
- Tech (n=145)
- Academia (n=13)
- Other industry (n=818)

## Age

- Young Children (under 5) (n=1,177)
- Older Children (over 5) (n=827)

## Gender

- Women (n=1,265)
- Men (n=730)
- Other/prefer not to say (n=11)

## Work status

- Working parents (n=1,475)
- Employed full time (n=1,239)
- Employed part time (n=236)

## US region

- Northeast (n=355)
- Midwest (n=438)
- Mid-Atlantic (n=114)
- South (n=527)
- Central (n=246)
- West (including CA) (n=324)
- West (excluding CA) (n=141)
- California (n=183)

## Primary child care

- Daycare/preschool (n=630)
- Nanny (n=257)
- Stay at home (n=785)
- Work from home (n=480)
- Family/friends (n=623)
- After school programs (n=490)

## Work environment

- Remote (n=630)
- Hybrid (n=426)
- Office (n=592)

## Political party

- Democrat (n=805)
- Republican (n=579)
- Independent / other (n=620)

