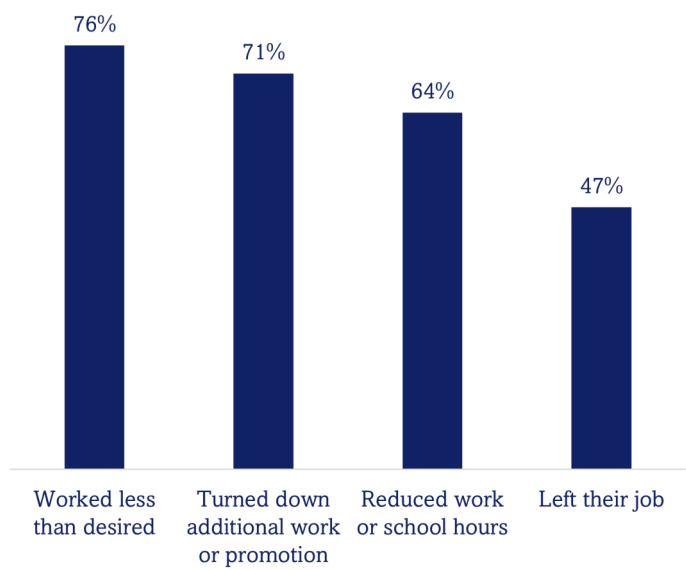


2025 SUBSIDY WAITLIST SURVEY

Between August 6 and September 29, 2025, the Study of Early Education through Partnerships and the VDOE surveyed 18,920 families who had been on the waitlist for a child care subsidy between June 2024 and June 2025. A total of 6,548 families responded, representing 35% of eligible families. At the time of the survey, 67% of respondents had not received a subsidy and 33% had.

ECONOMIC EXPERIENCES OF FAMILIES WAITING FOR A SUBSIDY

While waiting for a subsidy, most families experienced negative employment impacts due to child care challenges

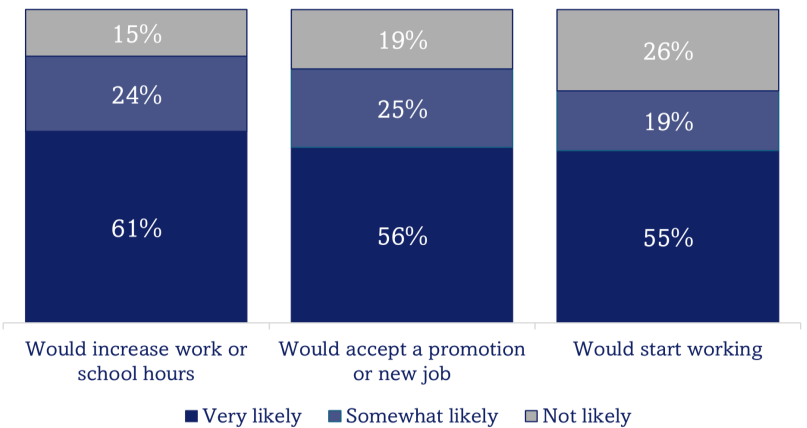


“I worry that **for the second year I will have to withdraw from school** and be a stay at home mom. The day to day anxiety leaves me on edge and nervous. I feel like I can't commit to any plans or ideas about the future months or year until I know if my daughter can go to day-care because we simply cannot afford the rates without subsidy.”

“We cannot afford childcare. Therefore I cannot work. We can't afford to live on one income and it's killing us.”

“I am unable to work due to a lack of childcare. Me and my 2 daughters are currently homeless. We are living out of our car. Having childcare would greatly improve our lives in many ways.”

Over half of waitlisted families would work more if they received a subsidy



ECONOMIC EXPERIENCES OF FAMILIES WHO RECEIVED SUBSIDIES

Unemployment was half as common among families who received a subsidy

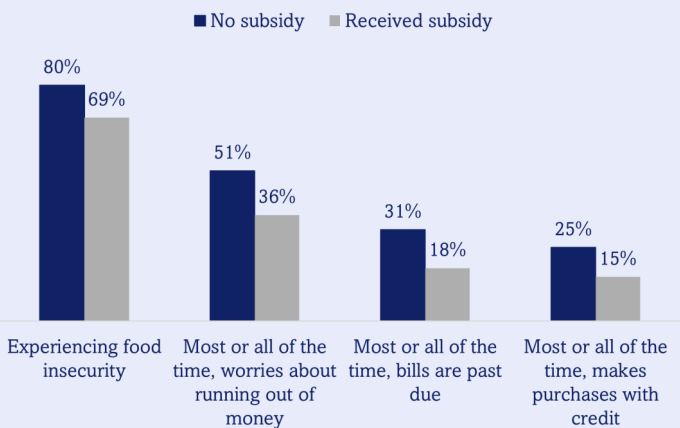
40% of families who did not receive a subsidy had at least 1 adult unemployed & looking for work

20% of families who received a subsidy had at least 1 adult unemployed & looking for work

63% who received a subsidy indicated they increased hours at work or school, started working, or accepted a promotion/new job

“Receiving child care assistance has allowed me as a single woman raising my son in a single parent household **the opportunity to go back to work.** I no longer have to worry about if I’m going to have to call out of work or if I will be fired due to not having someone to watch my son.”

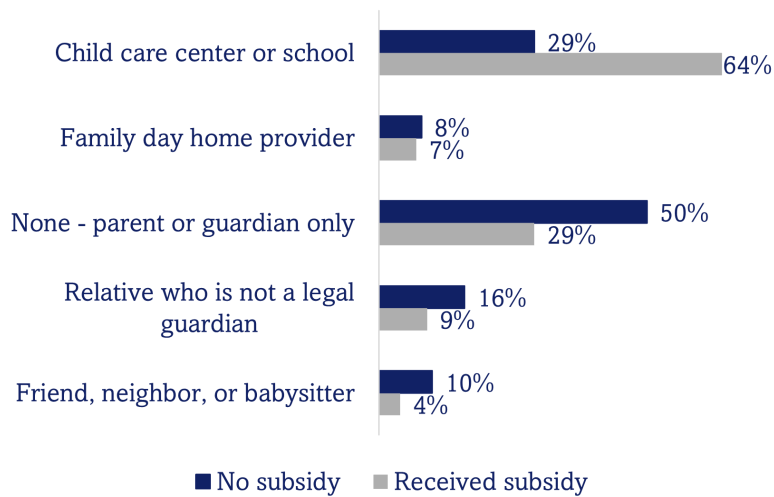
Waitlisted families who did not receive a subsidy reported higher levels of financial difficulty compared to families who received assistance



SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF SUBSIDIES

Families who received a subsidy were much more likely to report using center-based care in the past month, and far less likely to rely solely on parental care

In the past month, regularly used...



“My child is currently being cared for by someone I don’t fully trust, and quite honestly **I’m not sure it’s very safe. But, it’s all that I can currently afford** and continue to keep my job. I’m currently cutting my work hours to keep one child after school while the other is in daycare. I’m struggling to make payments for just daycare for one, but ideally they’d both be in daycare and at a safe learning facility versus the current one.”

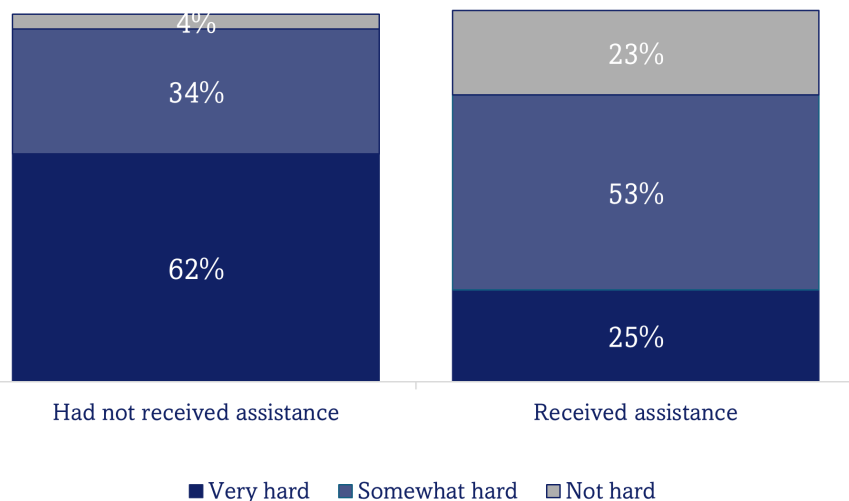
“As a working mom of three, including toddler twins and a child with special needs, **I’ve struggled to find reliable, licensed care within our budget. The wait for assistance has forced us to rely on unlicensed home daycares** out of desperation, which comes with safety concerns and constant instability.”

Families who received assistance had less difficulty paying for care

In the past month, paying for child care has been...

“Financially it’s hard and it’s a burden on my daughter’s grandma. She works from home and watches my daughter. **I fear she isn’t getting the social interaction she needs and I fear she’s getting too much screen time** since her grandma works she finds ways to keep her occupied like tv or tablet. Vs learning”

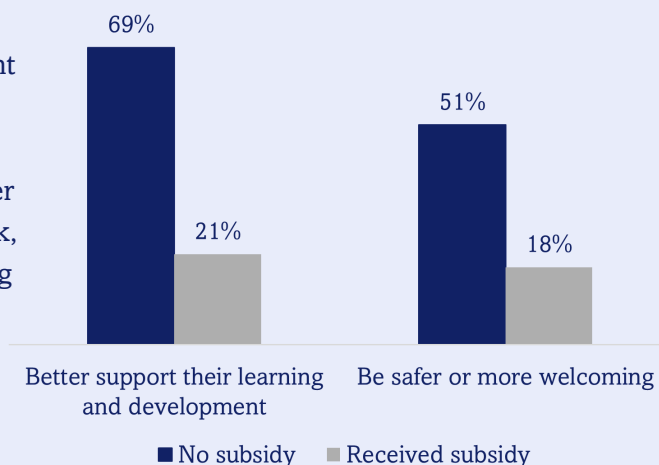
“Not having child care assistance has impacted both our finances and our child’s development. **My son is turning 2 years old and is not yet talking or interacting with other children.** Without access to affordable, quality care, he is missing vital opportunities for socialization and early learning that could support his development. At the same time, paying for private care is a financial strain...”



Families who did not receive a subsidy were far more worried about their children's learning, development, and safety

“My daughter is a little behind on learning because she is just being “watched” and not taught much. She doesn’t say many words and I have to put her in speech therapy. I work with her non stop when I am off of work, but she should have been being taught constantly while with a care provider. **I didn’t have enough money to pay for the day care center that teaches babies.**”

I am worried my child is missing out on care that could...



“**[Receiving a subsidy] has meant that my son, who has high functioning autism, can attend a safe school where he can get incredible care** and since starting there he has been thriving.”

“**Receiving child care assistance has been a blessing to my daughter and I.** I’m grateful to know that she is being taken care of and all of her teachers are helping her with her development and learning. I am able to work more hours because of the child care assistance. I will forever be grateful for this program.”