



The First Five Things To Know About: A New Poll Showing Voter Support For Child Care Funding

In July 2023, Public Opinion Strategies completed a poll on behalf of the First Five Years Fund, examining voters' attitudes toward the issue of child care and early childhood education programs.

The Bottom Line: The vast majority of voters continue to feel a sense of urgency around the need for affordable, quality child care. This concern cuts across party lines and spans state borders. It is felt strongly by parents and non-parents alike. As a result, even among concerns about the federal deficit, there continues to be persistent, substantial voter support for increased federal funding for child care and early learning programs.

Here are the First Five Things To Know about voter support for federal funding for child care.

1

The vast majority (93%) of voters believe it is important for working parents of young children to be able to find and afford quality child care programs. Not only do 93% believe this is important, but fully 63% say it is extremely important, and the overall sentiment clearly cuts across party lines, with 90% of Republicans, 93% of Independents, and 96% of Democrats saying finding quality child care programs for children or working parents is important.

2

Voters overwhelmingly believe federal funding for child care and early learning programs should be increased. Even after acknowledging concerns around the federal deficit, 74% of voters say they believe “increasing funding for child care and early childhood education programs is an important priority and a good use of tax dollars.” This sentiment cuts across party lines, with 64% of potential Trump voters and 87% of potential Biden voters agreeing on the issue.

3

Voters believe that resources directed to child care and early learning programs benefit not just the family, but the overall community. Nearly six out of ten voters (55%) say that resources directed to child care and early learning programs benefit both the individual family/children and the overall community, while 19% say the resources only benefit the community and 16% say they only benefit the individual family.

4

One reason for such strong and broad support – voters recognize the impact that child care can have on a family’s household economy. Previous polling has shown that business owners and voters feel strongly that child care is important for the local and national economy. In this poll, we see it also hits even closer to home. A quarter of voters with children under six (26%) said they or a family member had to miss work because of child care issues. And 59% of part-time or non-working parents say they would go back to work full-time if their child had access to quality child care at a reasonable cost.

5

There is broad support for each of five child care policy proposals tested. Voters provide clear bipartisan support to each of five child care reform policies proposed. Each proposal wins easily across gender and generational lines, as well as across both ideological and partisan lines. In fact, even '24 Trump voters provide at least 68% support for each of the five policies tested. These include:

- Providing tax incentives to businesses which provide or help their employees find and afford quality early childhood education programs – 82% support (including 78% of Republicans and 86% of Democrats)
- Providing greater funding to Head Start and Early Head Start to support families with the greatest needs. – 80% support (including 71% of Republicans and 89% of Democrats)
- Increasing the tax credit specifically designed to help working parents offset the cost of child care (also known as the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, or CDCTC) – 78% support (Including 73% of Republicans and 86% of Democrats)
- Increasing the federal funding to states to expand current programs that directly help low-income children (also known as the Child Care & Development Block Grant, or CCDBG) – 78% support (including 68% of Republicans and 89% of Democrats)
- Increasing the Child Tax Credit, a tax benefit for families with children which can be used on any household expense – 74% support (including 66% of Republicans and 81% of Democrats)

In Their Own Words

- **Independent Voter:** “In order to come out of poverty you must be able to work and continue education. Plus by providing good child care and early childhood education, you are building a stronger community and hopefully breaking the line of poverty.”
- **GOP Voter:** “People need to work because of inflation at unprecedented rates like never before seen. Most parents have to work to make ends meet. Child care is ridiculously high. Either kids don’t get child care, and a parent is forced to stay home, unable to make money, or they get some kind of break. I really don’t know how people afford to have kids in today’s economy. How do they afford anything with the cost of living so high like never before. Stop this administration from continuing doing this. It’s wrong and unfair to so many.”
- **DEM Voter:** “Family situations need to be stabilized so the community can benefit with enough workers, less crime, and an engaged public. This plan looks like it is a solid start to a big problem.”
- **Sarah Rittling, Executive Director, First Five Years Fund:** “We’ve seen a lot of polling through the years that underscores the importance of child care. What this poll tells us is that, both nationally and in these states, voters expect something to be done about the very real issues that families are facing. Members of Congress are making decisions right now about funding for the coming year, and it’s clear from these results that early care and learning programs are not only popular across the entirety of the political spectrum, but that voters want them prioritized.”

Learn More

About The Poll: <https://www.ffyf.org/july23poll/>
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