



**NATIONAL
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER**

Justice for Her. Justice for All.

DECEMBER 2025 FACT SHEET

Child Care Problems Disproportionately Impacted Black Women, Latinas, Disabled Women, and Those with Lower Household Incomes in 2024

Child care enables parents with young children, especially mothers, to join or remain in the paid labor force, enhancing the well-being of families and communities. Yet, due to chronic underfunding, child care in the United States has long been hard to access and prohibitively expensive for families. During the pandemic, Congress made the largest federal investment in child care since World War II, primarily through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which was signed into law in March 2021. ARPA included \$24 billion in child care stabilization grants, which expired in September 2023, as well as \$15 billion in supplemental funding for the existing Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program, which expired in September 2024.

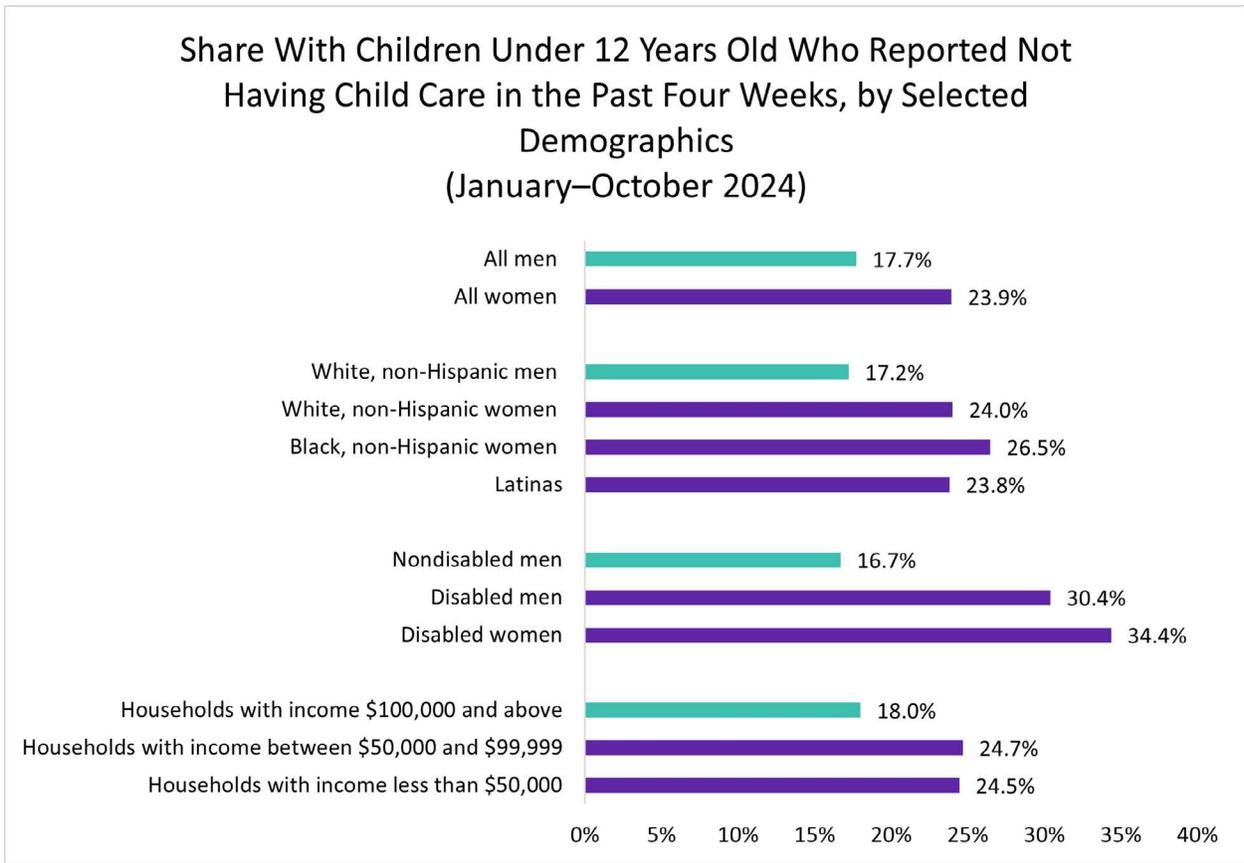
Parents and families experienced some impacts shortly after the \$24 billion child care stabilization grants expired in late 2023 in terms of higher tuition and less access to affordable care.¹ Families of color were disproportionately impacted by increases in child care costs, with Black families and Latinx families reporting tuition increases at higher rates than white families.² Other potential negative effects will be felt over a longer period of time. Black women's employment levels, for example, have been trending downward since early 2024 and well into 2025.³

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of disparities by gender, race and ethnicity, disability status, and household incomes in accessing child care and how the lack of access to child care impacted paid work in 2024. Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey between January and October 2024,⁴ this factsheet shows that among respondents with children under age 12 in their household, Black, non-Hispanic women, Latinas, disabled⁵ women, and those with lower household incomes⁶ were disproportionately likely to lack access to child care and leave or lose jobs due to not having child care.

Women, especially Black, non-Hispanic women, disabled women and men, and those with lower household incomes were disproportionately likely to lack child care at some point in 2024.

Among respondents with children under age 12 in their household:

- Nearly one in four women (23.9%) reported that, at some point in the last four weeks, children in their household were unable to attend child care as a result of child care being closed, unavailable, unaffordable, or because they were concerned about their child’s safety. In comparison, 17.7% of men reported the same. Black, non-Hispanic women (26.5%) were more likely than white, non-Hispanic men (17.2%) to report that children in their household could not attend child care at some point in the last four weeks.
- Disabled women (34.4%) and men (30.4%) were much more likely than nondisabled men (16.7%) to report children in their household were unable to attend child care at some point in the past four weeks.
- One in four respondents with a household income under \$50,000 (24.5%) or \$50,000 to \$99,999 (24.7%) reported children in their household were unable to attend child care at some point in the past four weeks, compared to fewer than one in five (18.0%) respondents with a household income of \$100,000 and above.

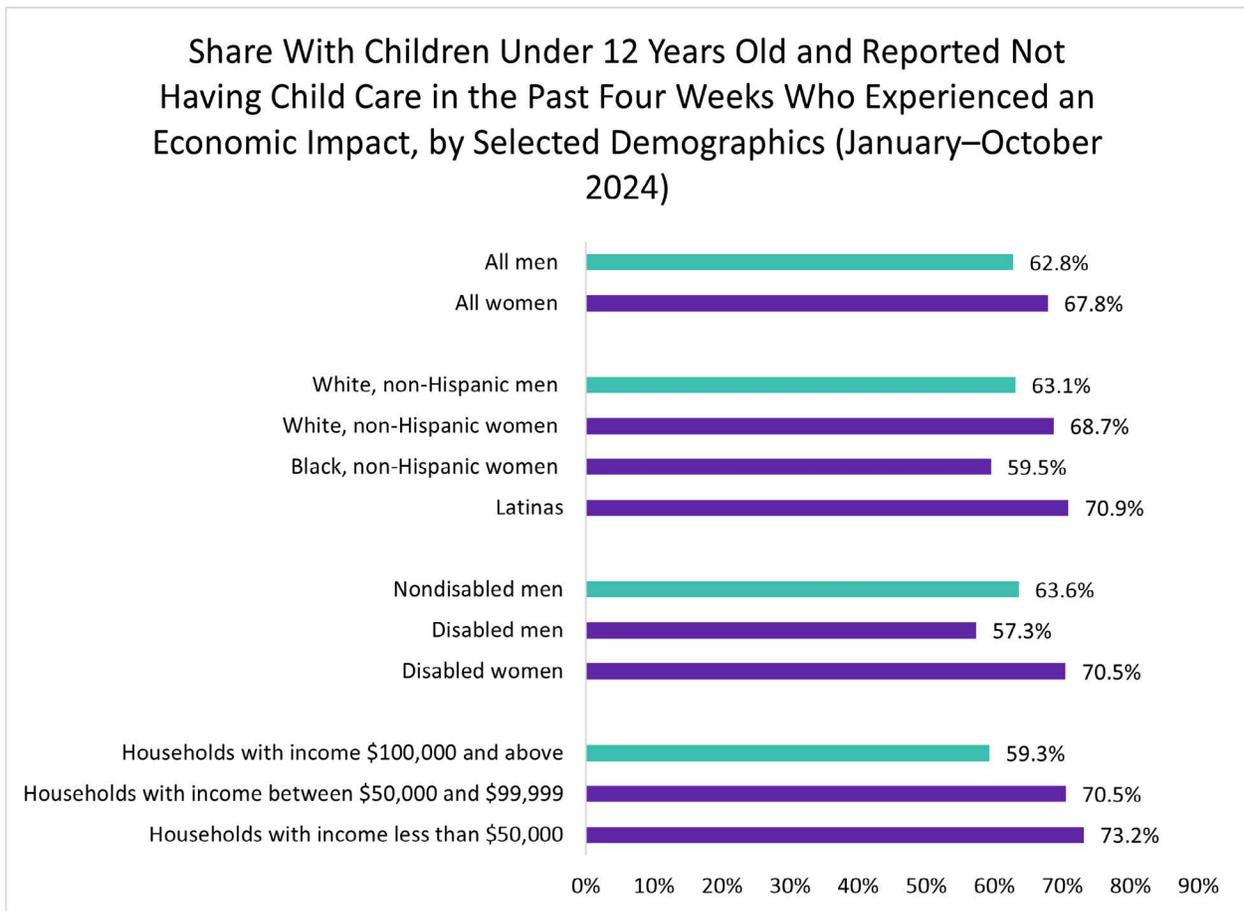


Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, pooling data from January through October 2024. Numbers by household incomes are based on data from January through September 2024 due to the lack of information on household incomes from October 2024. The analytic sample is restricted to those with children under 12 years old in their household. Survey respondents self-identified their race, whether they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, and if they had a disability via six questions. Refer to endnotes for more information.

Impacts of lacking access to child care on work were widespread, but Black, non-Hispanic women, Latinas, disabled men and women, and those with lower household incomes disproportionately left or lost a job due to lacking access to child care.

The lack of access to child care due to child care businesses being closed, unavailable, unaffordable, or because of concerns about child safety in care can have significant impacts on labor force participation and employment status. For example, people can be forced to take unpaid leave, cut their work hours, leave their jobs, lose their jobs, or not look for a job altogether. Impacts such as these were widespread among respondents who lacked child care for children under 12 years old in their household at some point in 2024:

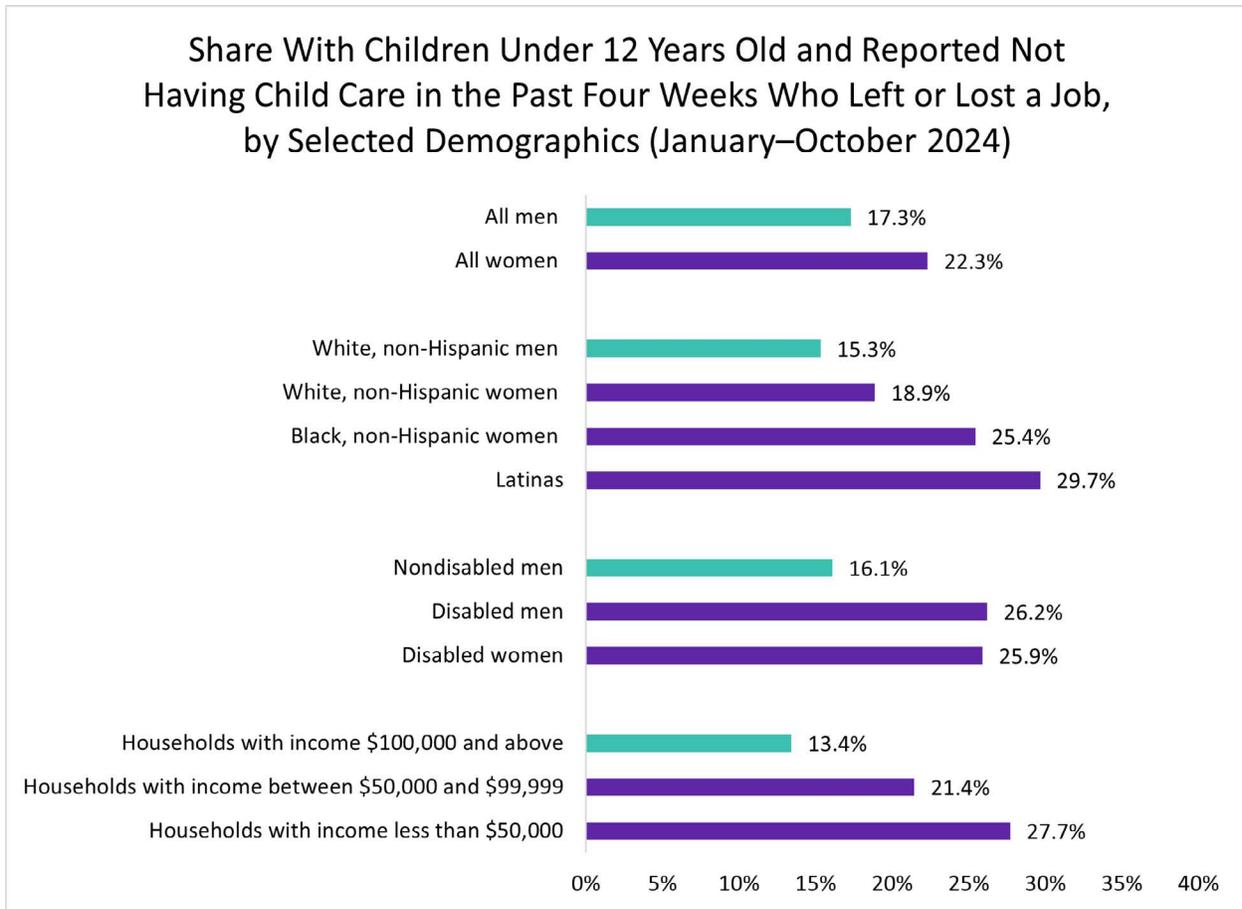
- Nearly seven in 10 (67.8%) women who lacked child care in the last four weeks experienced at least one impact of lacking access, compared to 62.8% of men.
- Seven in 10 (70.5%) disabled women who lacked child care in the last four weeks experienced at least one impact on work from lacking access, compared to 63.6% of nondisabled men and 57.3% disabled men.⁷
- Over seven in 10 respondents with a household income under \$50,000 (73.2%) or \$50,000 to \$99,999 (70.5%) who lacked access to child care experienced at least one impact on work from lacking access, compared to nearly six in 10 (59.3%) respondents with a household income of \$100,000 and above.



Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, pooling data from January through October 2024. Numbers by household incomes are based on data from January through September 2024 due to the lack of information on household incomes from October 2024. The analytic sample is restricted to those who did not have child care for children under 12 years old in their household in the past four weeks. Survey respondents self-identified their race, whether they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, and if they had a disability via six questions. Refer to endnotes for more information.

Black, non-Hispanic women, Latinas, disabled men and women, and those with lower levels of household incomes who lacked access to child care were disproportionately likely to leave or lose a job. Among respondents who lacked child care for children under 12 years old in their household at some point in 2024:

- Women were more likely than men to have left or lost a job (22.3% compared to 17.3%).
- Over one in four Latinas (29.7%) and Black, non-Hispanic women (25.4%) reported having left or lost a job. In comparison, fewer than one in five white, non-Hispanic men (15.3%) and women (18.9%) reported the same.
- Over a quarter of disabled men (26.2%)⁸ and women (25.9%) left or lost a job, compared to 16.1% of nondisabled men.
- Respondents with a household income under \$50,000 (27.7%) were over twice as likely as those with a household income of \$100,000 and above (13.4%) to report having left or lost a job. Over one in five (21.4%) respondents with a household income of \$50,000 to \$99,999 reported the same.



Source: NWLC calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, pooling data from January through October 2024. Numbers by household incomes are based on data from January through September 2024 due to the lack of information on household incomes from October 2024. The analytic sample is restricted to those who did not have child care for children under 12 years old in their household in the past four weeks. Survey respondents self-identified their race, whether they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, and if they had a disability via six questions. Refer to endnotes for more information.

Notes on Data: Data from the Household Pulse Survey are not necessarily representative of the U.S. population (see endnote 4 for more information). Therefore, the percentages in this factsheet refer to the shares of Pulse survey respondents for the purpose of comparing disparities across demographic groups and should not be interpreted as population-level estimates. Comparison groups (white, non-Hispanic men, nondisabled men, and those with a household income of \$100,000 and above) are provided throughout this analysis to demonstrate the inequities and discrimination that people with intersecting identities experience. These comparison groups represent some of the most advantaged groups compared to Black women, Latinas, disabled women, and those with lower household incomes. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

This analysis was done by Shengwei Sun and the following individuals contributed to the review, revision, design, and dissemination of this factsheet: Sarah Javaid, Amy Matsui, Whitney Pesek, Sydney Petersen, Karen Schulman, Shrija Shrestha, Jasmine Tucker, Delaney Wallace, and Hilary Woodward.

- 1 National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Going Over the Child Care Cliff" (November 2023), https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/nov_survey_brief.pdf; Shengwei Sun, "Women and Families Struggle with Child Care Following the Federal Funding Cliff, But Fare Better in States with Additional State Funding for Child Care" (National Women's Law Center, May 2024), <https://nwc.org/resource/women-and-families-struggle-with-childcare-following-the-federal-funding-cliff-but-fare-better-in-states-with-additional-state-funding-for-child-care/>.
- 2 National Association for the Education of Young Children, "Going Over the Child Care Cliff."
- 3 Valerie Wilson, "What's behind rising unemployment for Black workers?" (Economic Policy Institute, September 19, 2025), <https://www.epi.org/blog/whats-behind-rising-unemployment-for-black-workers/>.
- 4 Unless otherwise noted, all numbers appeared in this fact sheet are from NWLC analyses of U.S. Census Bureau, "Measuring Household Experiences During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, Household Pulse Survey," Census.gov, <https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html>. Data is pooled from January through October 2024. Data from December 2024 does not provide information on respondents' gender identity and therefore cannot be used in this analysis. Numbers by household incomes are based on data from January through September 2024 due to the lack of information on household incomes from October 2024.

As a Census Bureau's experimental data product, the Household Pulse Survey was designed to quickly and efficiently collect data regarding household's experiences during the pandemic. The survey was conducted virtually, and the overall response rates are significantly lower than most federally sponsored surveys, raising concerns about nonresponse bias (For more on nonresponse bias for the 2020 Household Pulse Survey, see https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/technical-documentation/hhp/2020_HPS_NR_Bias_Report-final.pdf). Other potential sources of error of the Household Pulse Survey data include measurement, coverage, processing, and item nonresponse. All results in this analysis should therefore be interpreted with caution.
- 5 The U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey asks respondents six questions related to disability and if a respondent answers "yes – a lot of difficulty" to any one or more of the questions, they are categorized as having a disability. The questions are as follows: "Do you have difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?" "Do you have difficulty hearing, even when using a hearing aid?" "Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?" "Do you have difficulty with self-care, such as washing all over or dressing?" "Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example, understanding or being understood?" This follows methodology created by the Center for Disease Control. For more information, see: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/functioning-and-disability.htm>.
- 6 This analysis compares respondents with a household income of less than \$50,000, those with a household income of \$50,000-\$99,999, and those with a household income of \$100,000 and above.
- 7 Interpret the estimate for disabled men with caution (relative standard error = 14%).
- 8 Interpret the estimate for disabled men with caution (relative standard error = 17%).