

# What working parents' child care challenges mean for your company



# Working parents need more support.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented challenges for working parents and HR leaders alike. We're hearing from members and clients about the lack of support and guidance that exists to help parents make confident decisions about how to best provide care for their children. We've seen a 300% increase in appointment bookings by parents with Maven Pediatricians and Mental Health Providers, which tells us just how great the need is for added support during these times.

So we decided to find out what the day-to-day situation really is for parents working hard and weighing these child care decisions.

Maven commissioned a survey of 1,000 U.S. parents at the end of July 2020 to determine how parents across the country are thinking about child care decision making, and what this means for employers. What we heard is most parents are anxious, undecided, and want more support as they navigate these decisions.

HR leaders are in a unique position to help working parents through this difficult time. "Working parents' anxiety is palpable," said a Maven Mental Health Provider following a session she led with a parents' group at one client company. Our new data illustrates clear takeaways for how HR can get ahead of these trends and understand what to prioritize when creating programs and policies that will help address child care challenges for employees long-term.

# 1. Share resources for parents.

More than 3 in 5 parents do not have a clear plan for child care or school as of August, and they're looking for support as they navigate this in the months ahead.

*More than 3 in 5 parents* do not have a clear plan for child care or school this fall.



- Parents with younger children are facing greater uncertainty: 72% of parents with kids age 5 and younger do not have a clear plan.
- Compared with 44% of parents with kids between 11 and 17 years old who do have a clear plan.
- The majority of parents, 62%, plan on keeping their children home, although only 38% are definite about this. **15% percent of parents still have no idea at all.**

## **WHY THIS MATTERS:**

- Working parents will face child care and in-home remote learning challenges well into next year. Many of the challenges that characterized the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the stress of balancing parenting with work, will continue.
- HR leaders have the opportunity to step up support for working parents and help them navigate their decisions. Providing resources, tools, or child care benefits to your employees will help reduce anxieties and present viable options for undecided parents.

## 2. Provide parents with support and tools for managing anxiety.

*Two-thirds of parents* report feeling anxious as they navigate decisions about child care this fall.



- 42% are *very* anxious when it comes to these decisions.
- Parents whose youngest child is between 5 and 10 are more likely to be very anxious (50%) than those whose youngest child is less than 5 (37%) or between 11 and 17 (37%).

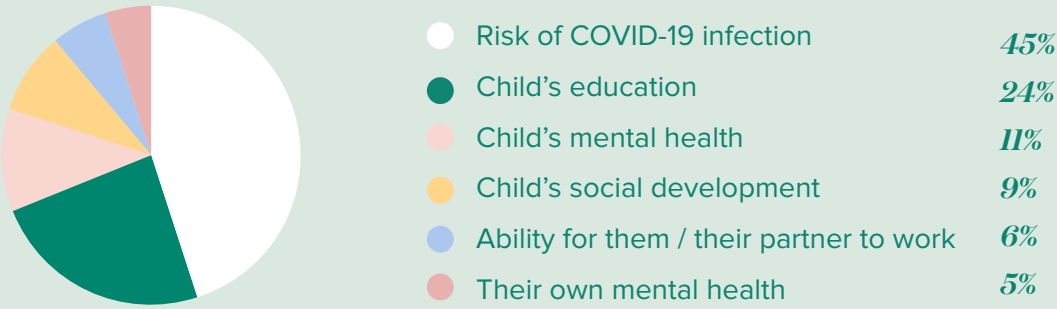
### **WHY THIS MATTERS:**

- With anxiety around child care decisions affecting two-thirds of parents, HR leaders have two crises to manage here—helping their employees manage child care choices so they can be productive at work, and helping their employees manage the anxiety that affects their everyday health and wellbeing. As we'll later discuss, parents aren't prioritizing their own mental health during this time. Instead, they're stressed about what the right choice is for their child. Remind parents of telehealth services that your company offers for mental health counselling to get them the support they need through the decision making process.

# 3. Step up mental health support.

Parents are putting their own wellbeing last as they make these decisions, which could carry long-term implications for their mental health.

## What do parents say is their main concern influencing their decisions about child-care and schooling this fall?

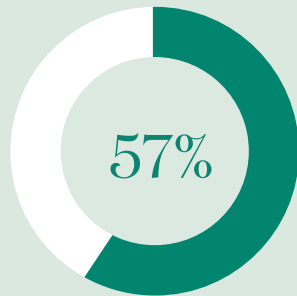


- 45% of parents said their child's education, mental health, and social development are the top factors impacting their decision. Parents whose youngest child is between 5 and 10 are more likely to be very anxious (50%) than those whose youngest child is less than 5 (37%) or between 11 and 17 (37%).

### WHY THIS MATTERS:

- It's not surprising that parents are putting their children's needs well ahead of their own, but the continued stress on parents brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with them putting themselves last, could carry long-term implications for their mental health. Providing children with enriching experiences, whether choosing to keep them in the home or send them out of the home to school or daycare, is crucial to 45% of parents.
- On Maven, we've seen a 300% spike in mental health visits since the start of the pandemic. Providing a telehealth solution that gives parents easy access to virtual care is key, especially as they try to juggle child care and work. Telling parents that you take their mental health seriously is one way to allow them the opportunity to prioritize it for themselves.

## 4. Implement new policies and practices to show your support.



of working parents do not feel supported by their employer as they navigate child care challenges.

- 1 in 5 parents feel they are receiving little to no support from their employer.
- Parents with children under 5 feel less supported than parents with older children (ages 10 and up).
- **What would make them feel more supported? 83% of working parents said they want flexible work hours from their employers.**

### WHY THIS MATTERS:

- This is huge. It tells us that the solutions that HR teams put in place in the spring or early summer when COVID-19 first made its impact are not the same solutions that parents are going to need when it comes to child care challenges down the road.
- With 83% of working parents telling us that they're looking for flexible working hours, it's time for you and your people managers to reevaluate policies and consider options that allow parents to set hours that will better align with child care responsibilities, such as school and play. Because many parents are working remotely, flexible hours can allow them to alternate child care responsibilities with other parents or caregivers to ensure that they get quality time working and caring for their family.

# What's next?

Data-driven decision making can empower your team to give working parents the support they need. Because this situation and your employees' needs will continue to change in the months ahead, it's best for you and your team to take a proactive approach.

## **SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN IMPLEMENT RIGHT NOW INCLUDE:**

- Monthly surveys to ask your parents what they need from you and their managers
- Flexible working hours
- Parenting ERGs
- Training for managers to be empathetic to parents' needs
- Child care benefits
- Easy resources like the [COVID-19 Child Care Decision Making Tool](#)

## **AND THESE ARE SOME OF THE KEY FEATURES THAT YOU'RE GOING TO NEED WHEN CONSIDERING AN EFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO SUPPORT AND RETAIN PARENTS LONG-TERM:**

- On-demand telehealth and virtual support, including mental health
- Help navigating child care and school challenges on top of work
- Access to expert guidance and vetted answers
- Live webinars and virtual classes providing actionable tips
- Easy-to-use, personalized platforms

# We're here for you and your employees.

Maven is the first family health solution to integrate coaching for parents and specialized pediatric care, improving behavioral and clinical outcomes for parents and children.

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