

COVID-19

MILITARY SUPPORT INITIATIVE

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Pain Points Poll Qualitative Report: CHILDCARE

**TELL US MORE ABOUT
HOW YOUR FAMILY PLANS
TO MANAGE CHILD CARE
NEEDS IF THE VIRUS
CONTINUES TO SPREAD
ONE MONTH FROM NOW.**

Question fielded May 6 - 26, 2020 || All respondents, regardless of military affiliation, received this question; however, 74% of those who responded were military spouses.

The greatest portion of respondents indicated that they would need increased child care if the virus continues to spread one month from now. Of those with child care needs, new child care and support from volunteers and family members were the most commonly cited solutions. Grandparents, college-aged children, and babysitters were frequently reported as part of respondents' plan to address child care gaps, particularly for those continuing to telework. While respondents identified several child care options they plan to pursue if the virus continues, concern about the feasibility of continuing to manage child care using their original strategies was a prominent theme. Respondents cited depleting PTO, unpaid leave, and financial hardship as common reasons for reexamining child care plans. Three respondents indicated that they would have to resign, decline job offers, and delay their job searches due to the need for child care if the virus continues to spread. Despite the prospect of child care facilities reopening, several respondents noted they plan not to use outside child care due to fear of exposure.

“I will have to telework or take a leave of absence from my job to care for my child if my regular child care center (on base CDC) does not open up by the time I can return to work full time.”

- Army Spouse

“In order to help my son and daughter with their school work and keep them on a schedule, I need to modify my working hours. My husband cannot help my kids because they are not biologically his and he has very little patience with them due to his PTSD and other disabling issues. I am stressed out about missing deadlines and having the full ability to concentrate on my work because I am constantly being interrupted by someone at any given time.”

- Spouse of a Veteran

“I am currently a stay at home mom and do not require additional child care for my school age kids. We are doing school virtually and doing the best we can. I had just finalized (and interviewed) to become a substitute teacher before the pandemic, which was a bummer, but as far as child care needs we are good.” - Air Force Spouse

“We will continue with our current plan of reducing my hours, where I work as an essential personnel at a hospital, so that I can come home 1/2 day and my husband (guard member) can telework from home. This plan will work until my husband is required to return to his civilian job or until our daycare requires us to resume payments (which they are currently not doing).” - National Guard Spouse

TOP CODES		
PERCENT	COUNT	CODE
14%	23	Increased child care
12%	20	New child care
12%	19	Unsure of work/child care needs
10%	16	Volunteer to provide child care
9%	15	Help from family for child care
9%	15	Special needs child concerns
4%	6	Alternate shifts for child care
2%	3	Lack of child care preventing employment
	Total: 161	

PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAVE HELPED OR DID HELP YOU EFFECTIVELY MANAGE YOUR CHILD CARE SITUATION MORE EASILY THESE PAST FEW MONTHS, IF ANYTHING.

“I am about to return to work, some of which will be done from home but some days in office. I do not have a plan for children at this stage. Installation working with local authorities to test family members (grandparents) coming in so that they don’t have to quarantine would be awesome. Grandparents are willing to help but the 14 day quarantine effectively means they can’t.” - Air Force Spouse

“Command allowing military to work remotely has allowed us to better manage care for our children from home by “taking turns” working and caring for the kids.” - Marine Corps Spouse

Question fielded May 27 - June 2, 2020 || All respondents, regardless of military affiliation, received this question; however, 100% of those who responded were female military spouses.

Respondents reported that the ability to telework, both for service members and spouses, has allowed the scheduling flexibility necessary to manage their child care needs during the COVID-19 pandemic effectively. Although, clearer communication from installation leaders about telework policies and CDC eligibility would have helped respondents make more effective plans for alternating child care responsibility. Respondents also indicated that access to COVID-19 testing for CDC staff and out-of-town extended family members would have helped them feel more confident about relying on other caregivers.

“Communication from base leadership would have been beneficial in formulating a plan. We have been able to alternate teleworking to ensure we had child care.” - Air Force Spouse

TOP CODES		
PERCENT	COUNT	CODE
23%	3	Don't need child care
23%	3	Concerned about possible child care issues for the future if work from home continues
23%	3	Providing child care while working remotely
15%	2	Alternate shifts for child care
15%	2	Reduced hours due to child care
	Total: 13	

PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR FAMILY IS MANAGING YOUR CURRENT CHILD CARE SITUATION, INCLUDING BARRIERS THAT ARE PREVENTING YOU FROM OBTAINING ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE SUPPORT IF YOU REQUIRE IT.

“AD member being deployed and was gone 8 months and got pushed out to possibly another 4. During this crisis. It’s all falling on the spouse to work from home, manage a special needs child with no respite care now, do everything and maintain 3 kids and now homeschool on top of it all. And people can’t help because of social distancing.” - Military Spouse

“AD member is deployed, return home indefinitely postponed. Spouse is working full time / more hours than normal, while attempting to care for 2 young children alone. CDC is closed and quarantine means no nearby relatives or friends able to assist.”

- Air Force Spouse

Question fielded April 15 - May 5, 2020 || All respondents, regardless of military affiliation, received this question; however, 71% of those who responded were military spouses.

Respondents frequently cited the inability to find child care as a current barrier to child care support (28%). Closed CDC facilities, limited occupancy thresholds at off-post child care facilities, and reduced facility hours for sanitation were the most common reasons respondents struggled to find child care. Respondents indicated that providing child care while working remotely (21%) and homeschooling (14%) were current child care options, often as a back-up plan if facilities were closed. Of those who reported providing child care while working remotely as a part of their current child care plan, 90% were military spouses (26/29). Loss of working hours as a result of barriers to child care was evident in many responses. While respondents desired for their extended family members to provide child care support, barriers to travel and concern for exposure were cited as concerns.

“There is no child care as our provider is closed and we have no other options other than asking my in-laws to travel and move in to our house. We are choosing to protect their health instead.”

- Air Force Spouse

TOP CODES		
PERCENT	COUNT	CODE
28%	39	Can't find child care
21%	29	Providing child care while working remotely
14%	20	Homeschooling
14%	19	Don't need child care
8%	11	Reduced hours due to child care
7%	10	Help from family for child care
	Total: 140	

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