

# COVID-19

## CHALLENGES FACED BY VIRGINIA CHILD CARE CENTERS


Child Care Aware of Virginia conducted a statewide survey of child care providers and early education programs from May 13 through September 4 to capture the challenges faced by child care centers and home-based providers. This brief describes the responses from center-based programs.

More than three-quarters of center-based educators who responded to the survey reported being open at the time of completion. Therefore, survey responses are mostly a reflection of the challenges faced by the child care/ECE industry as expressed by those who may be struggling but are still open for business.

## CURRENT CHILD CARE LANDSCAPE

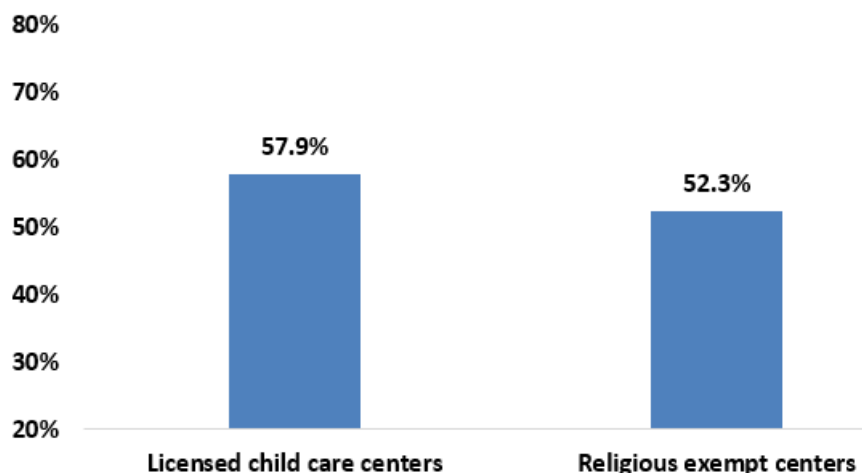
The current public health pandemic has caused enormous financial difficulties for center-based child care and education programs. Largely an industry funded by private-paying families for the care of their children, high unemployment and anxiety about COVID-19 exposure have resulted in low child enrollment since the pandemic's onset. Since child enrollment fees are the operating revenue upon which centers depend to pay staff and fixed costs such as mortgage or rent, many centers have closed, at least temporarily. Some remain closed, and those that are open are struggling to stay afloat.

Currently, about 57.9% of Virginia licensed child care centers and 52.3% of religious license-exempt centers are open.



CENTER-BASED PROGRAMS INCLUDE LICENSED AND LICENSE-EXEMPT CHILD CARE CENTERS, PRESCHOOLS, HEAD START, VPI AND SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS ACROSS VIRGINIA.

**COVID 19: VA Licensed Child Care Centers & Religious Exempt Centers Open for Business**

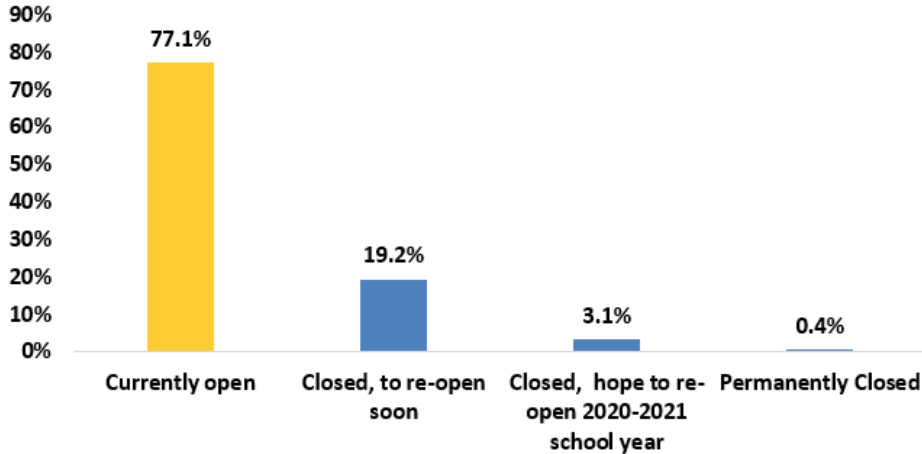




## SURVEY RESULTS OVERVIEW

Nearly 670 representatives from center-based programs (about 19%) responded to the survey to share their experiences about operating a business that serves the public during the ongoing pandemic.

**COVID-19: VA Center-based Operating Status of Survey Responders**



Woodbridge. "I HAVE USED

**\$40,000**

OF OUR SAVINGS TO KEEP THE CENTER OPEN, PAY TEACHERS, AND COVER THE INCREASE IN SUPPLIES."

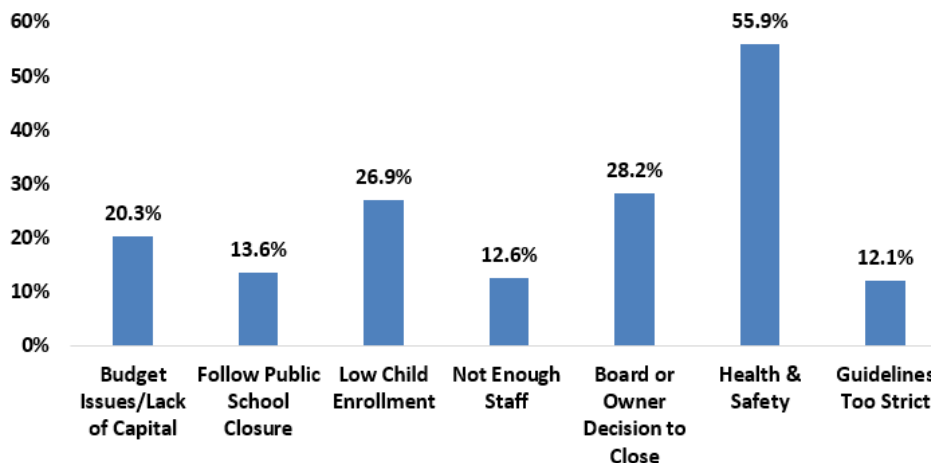
## CLOSURES: SINCE VA COVID EXECUTIVE ORDERS ISSUED

The survey found that 41.5% of center-based programs that responded have remained open since executive orders were first issued in Virginia. This means that since March 2020, 58.5% of centers that responded closed at some point, even though most closures were temporary.

**58.5%**  
OF CENTERS CLOSED AT SOME POINT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Center-based programs were asked to indicate the factors that influenced their decision to close.

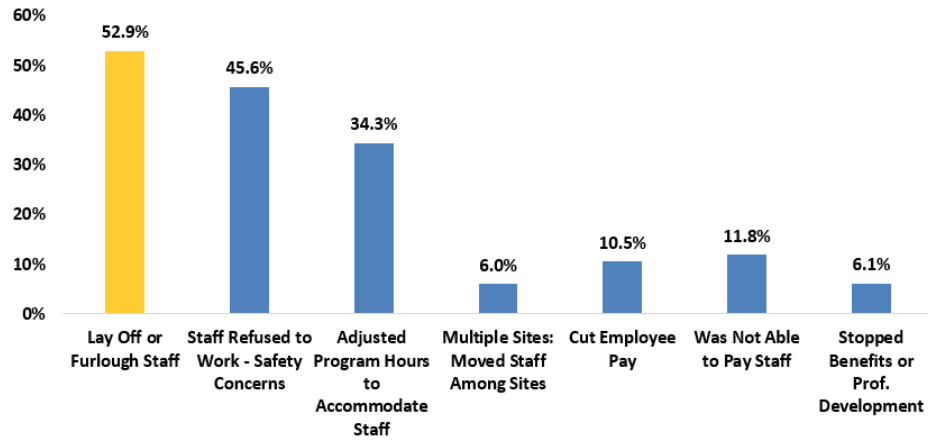
**COVID 19: Reasons for VA Center-based Program Closures**



# CENTER-BASED STAFFING CHALLENGES

Center-based programs were asked to list staffing challenges due to COVID-19.

COVID-19: VA Center-based Staffing Challenges



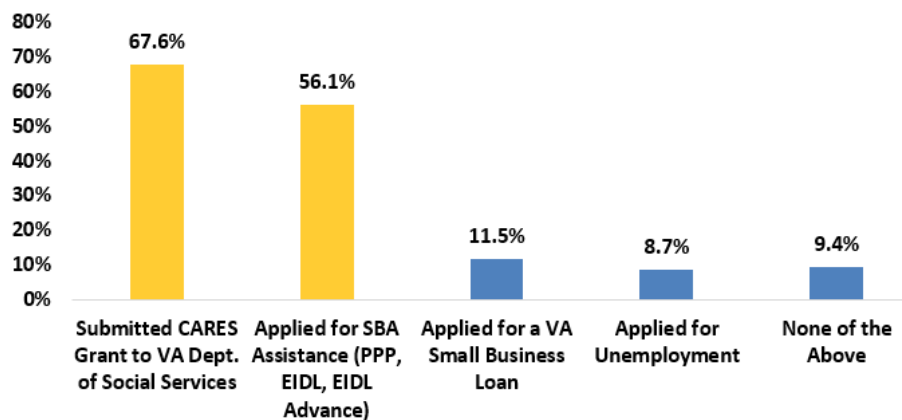
# 52.9%

OF CENTERS HAD TO LAY OFF OR FURLOUGH STAFF

## MANY CENTERS APPLIED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Centers were asked to select the types of assistance for which they applied for financial help.

COVID-19: VA Center-based Programs that Applied for Financial Assistance



## Financial support was a life line for many centers.

A director of a center in Ashburn said, "We lost 85 % of our enrollment since COVID-19 started. If it weren't for grants (DSS and PPP), we probably would have been forced to close."

Despite support for which many providers were grateful, **the top two concerns for centers remain:**

1. meeting operational costs and
2. paying staff

**Broadway.** "I am very grateful that I received the PPP loan and that is completely what paid our payroll for 8 weeks, if it wasn't for that we would have had to close. Also, I as the Owner/Director did not take any salary for 3 months. We received our CARES grant last week, so we have been able to purchase some needed materials for the children and some more disinfecting supplies."

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

**Reston.** "Before COVID, we were running our school with 185 children and 39 staff members. We closed our center from March 26 thru May 8th. Reopened and started with 19 children on May 11th. Few children are trickling in each week but we are not even going to break even if we don't have 127 children back in our school because of the over head cost (rent, utilities, loans etc)."

**Harrisonburg.** "I am currently struggling with having enough staff members that are willing to work for the salary offered."

**Virginia Beach.** "Although we prepared applications for Coronavirus Relief, the banks ran out of money, were overwhelmed by the number of applications received and would not take ours. We reached out to other lending institutions but they too were overwhelmed by the number of applicants and were unable to fulfill our request for funding."

**Chantilly.** "Even with the P-3 loan, I am concerned about my business' ability to sustain operations after the 8 week period."

