

Child Care Stability Survey

Think Small conducted an anonymous survey of more than 300 metro-area early educators to understand their needs and experiences. Respondents reported increasing absences, decreasing enrollments, and significant increased strain as they navigate families' rising needs and new financial and operational pressures.

Program Impacts December 2025–February 2026

27%

had to close their program unexpectedly

35%

saw increased absences

27%

saw decreased enrollments

Financial & Operational Strain

36%

worry about having to close permanently in the next 6 months

75%

say their programs would be negatively impacted by federal funding freezes or losses

59%

are worried about families being able to pay



Children using Child Care Assistance or Early Learning Scholarships are allowed 25 days absent in a calendar year.

Of those educators who are serving children using these programs:

41%

say half or more will hit 25 day absent limit

11%

say ALL will hit the 25 day absent limit