

# Child Care Access During COVID-19: Effects on Employment and Well-Being in Durham, NC

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*Supported by exploratory funds from the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*



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Child Care Access is central to economic empowerment. Insufficient child care access in the U.S. pushes parents out of the workforce, hurts the economy, and perpetuates cycles of gender and racial inequality because women and people of color are most likely to suffer because of child care barriers.

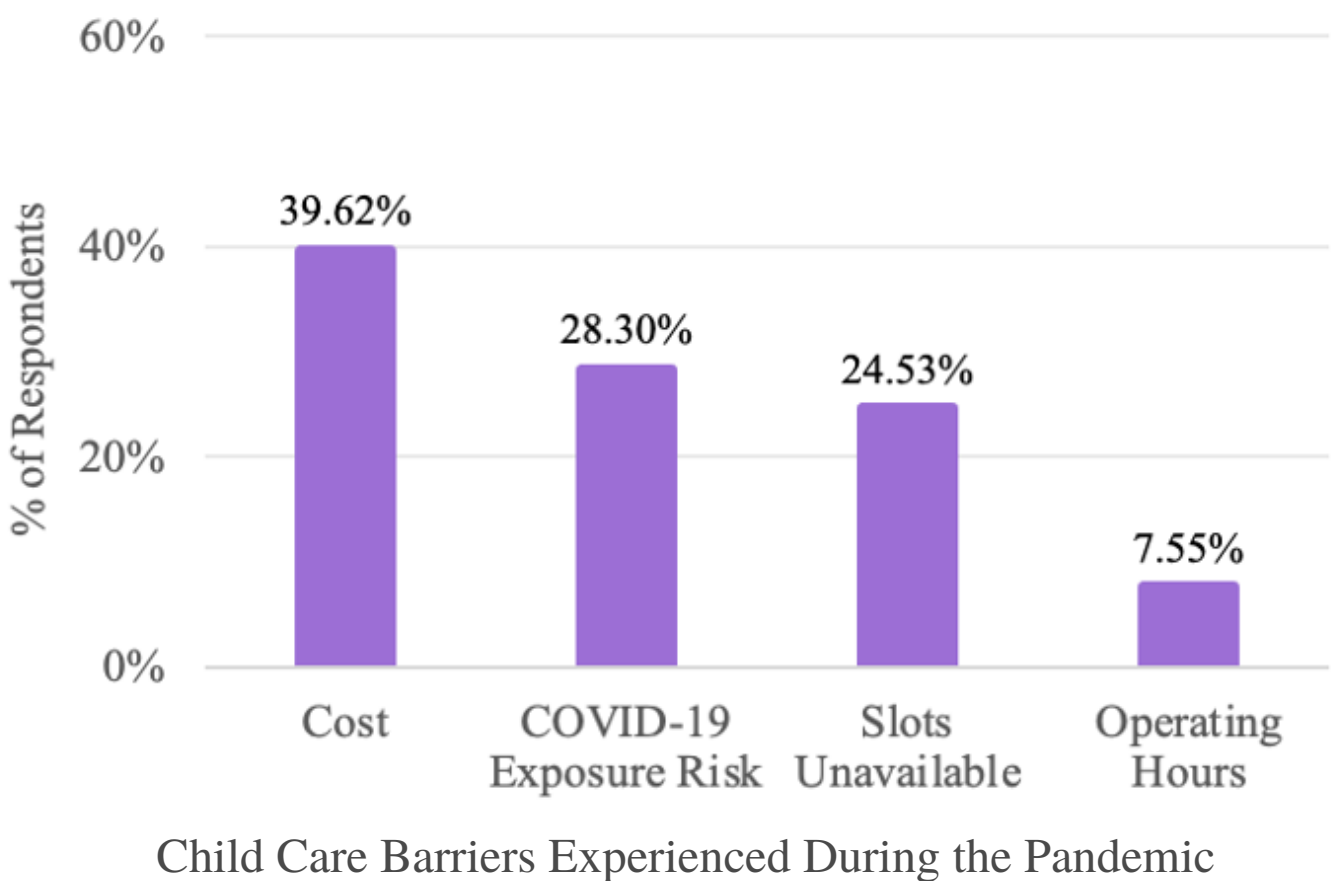
As COVID-19 shut down and increased financial insecurity, issues related to insufficient child care were exacerbated. To investigate how this impacted people in Durham, I surveyed 75 parents in Durham, NC with kids ages 5 and under. I asked about 3 key issues:

- 1. Barriers to accessing childcare
- 2. Effects of childcare on employment
- 3. Effects of childcare on overall wellbeing

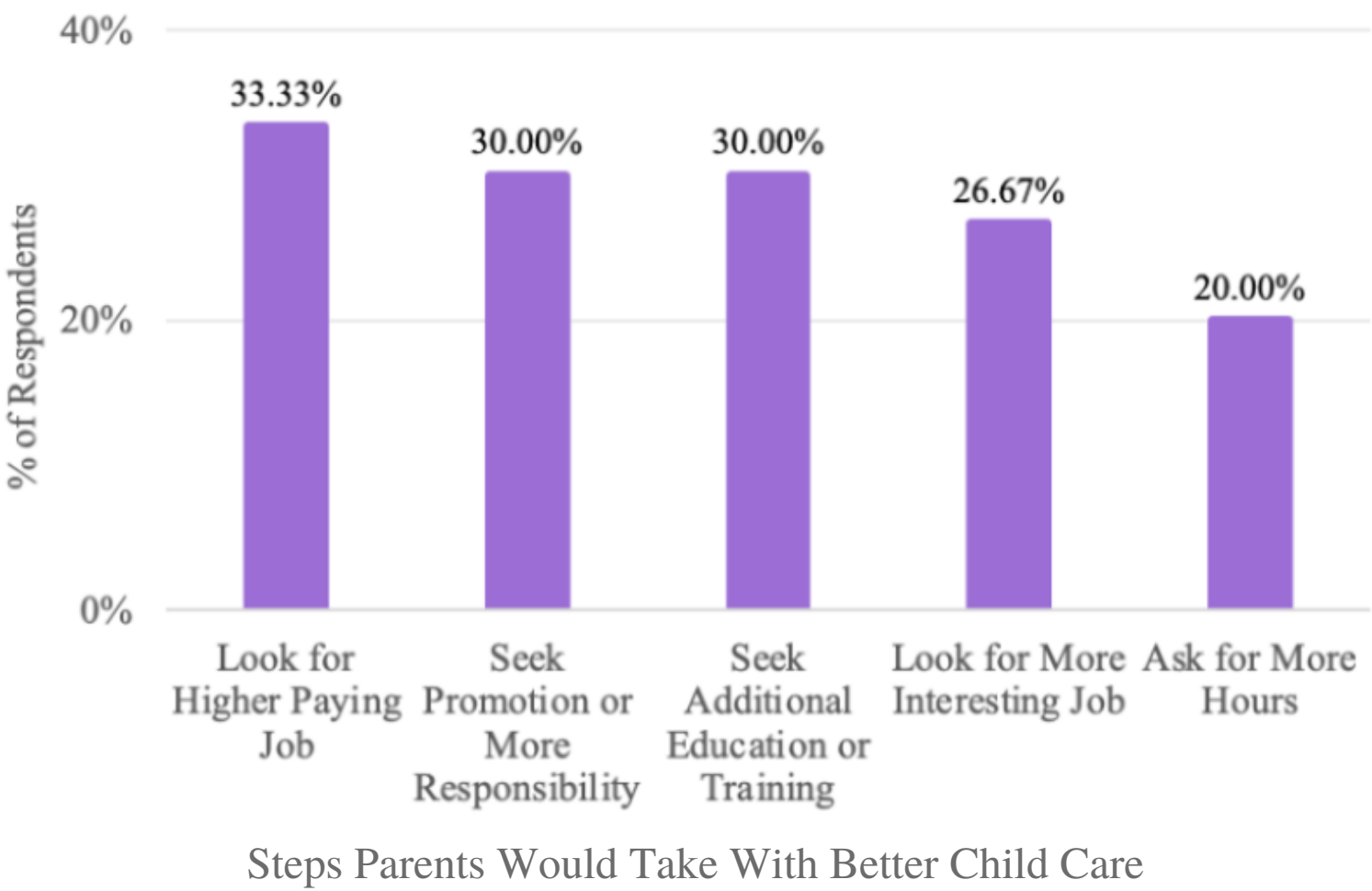
## Research Methods

To gather data for this research, I administered an approximately 10-minute-long web-based Qualtrics survey to parents in Durham, NC with at least one child ages five or younger. Respondents received a \$10 Amazon gift card for their participation, an incentive that was generously funded by the Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Participant recruitment was conducted through flyer distribution and outreach to child care providers and community organizations.

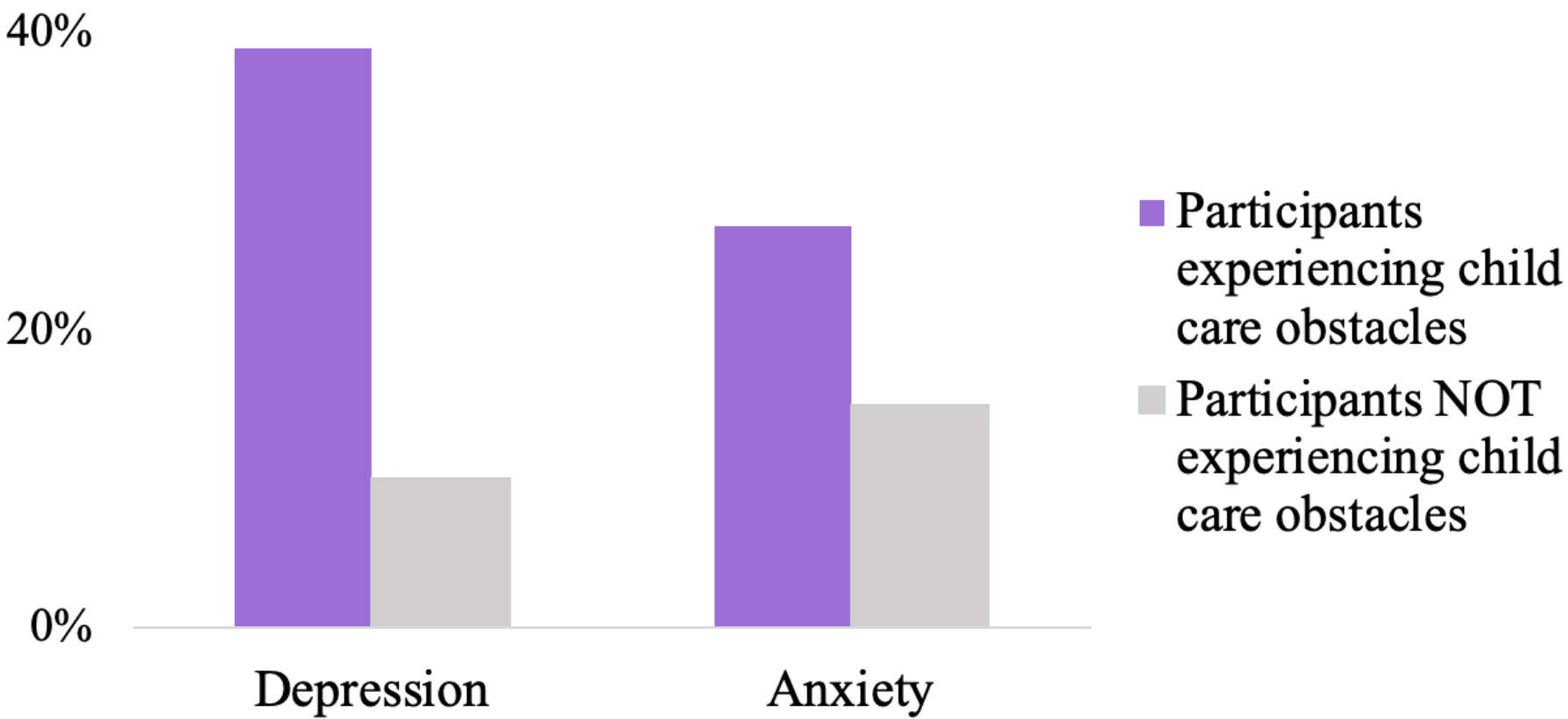
Parents experience various child care barriers, with high costs being the most common barrier.



With improved child care access, parents would take steps to advance their careers.



Mental health struggles are more prevalent among those experiencing child care obstacles.



Policy Recommendations

- 1 Invest in support for low-income families.** Child care access is an issue that intersects with many other areas of inequality. If parents had more support related to challenges such as finding employment, affording housing, and accessing healthcare, they would be better equipped to combat child care barriers.
- 2 Aggregate Resources.** Navigating social services and various resources available to help with child care can be a really challenging and overwhelming process. Local organizations, institutions, and employers can be of use by making it easier for parents to access the help that is available to them.
- 3 Expand Durham Pre-K.** Durham currently has a program called Durham Pre-K that provides free pre-k for 4-year-olds that come from families with a household income below 400% of the federal poverty line. Families above the income threshold have to pay a monthly fee that is calculated on a sliding scale based on income. This program differs from other universal child care programs in that it doesn't include children that are three years old and it restricts access based on income. Adding an additional year of eligibility and lowering the thresholds for financial support would benefit parents.