



Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy

Audience Understanding Surveys: Child Care

May 2024

Grow Progress conducted three Audience Understanding Surveys with the Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy team across three states, MT, WI, and PA. This memo contains the key takeaways from 1,745 respondents who were asked the following key opinion question:

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The government should help make child care more affordable for families.

Key Findings & Recommendations

- **Most Americans believe that the government should help make child care affordable:** 77% of respondents agreed with the key opinion question, highlighting how the majority of Americans do believe that the government should help keep child care affordable. The goal of messages should be to take this belief and connect it to specific policies that people can support to increase child care accessibility.
 - Create messages that are centered around the themes that the **agree** segment surfaced: **cost of living**, **government responsibility**, and **strengthening the economy**. By creating messages based on these themes, you can test which theme proves to be the most effective persuasive device for moving people on this specific issue.
 - Example message: *“As the cost of living has increased, child care has become unattainable for many Americans. That is why the American Rescue Plan invested resources to lower child care costs for typical families by over \$1,200 per child per year, enabling hundreds of thousands of mothers to reenter the workforce.”*
- **Helping working families helps the economy:** These tests reinforced the key findings from the Winning Jobs Narrative research. Many respondents who agreed with the key opinion question stated that part of the reason to make child care more affordable is that it allows working parents to reenter the workforce and contribute to an overall stronger economy.

- **Using the “COVID” framework:** Of the 1,745 respondents, only 2 cited COVID as a reason that prices might have gone up in the past few years as part of their rationale for supporting more affordable child care. Based on this, we do not recommend using COVID as one of the main persuasive frameworks in message design.

Observations

Key Opinion Segments

Respondents could answer the key opinion question with one of the following responses: Strongly Disagree (3%), Somewhat Disagree (6%), Neither Agree nor Disagree (14%), Somewhat Agree (29%), Strongly Agree (48%).

Below, we’ve grouped the strongly and somewhat disagree segments together as “Disagree”, and the strongly and somewhat agree segments together as “Agree”. We’ve then pulled out specific themes that surfaced in respondent answers,

Disagree

Only 9% of respondents fell into this key opinion segment. This segment does *not* think the government should help out more with child care. They value tradition and merit more than other segments, and believe that the government should prioritize individual freedom above all else. Below are themes pulled directly from respondent open ends:

Responsibility: This segment believes that it is the responsibility of individuals who choose to have children to pay for them, not the government.

Respondent Profile	Quote
PA, White, Woman, 55+, Rural, High School or Less, \$50K – \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Republican, Conservative, Voted Rep	<i>“People should have children only if they can afford to. It is not our governments responsibility”</i>
MT, White, Woman, 55+, Suburban, Bachelor’s Degree+, \$0 – \$49K, Protestant/Other Christian (Not Roman Catholic), No, Democrat, Conservative, Voted Dem	<i>“It’s not the govt responsibility to pay for child care it’s the parents who chose to bring these children into this world”</i>

WI, White, Man, 55+, Suburban, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, Protestant/Other Christian (Not Roman Catholic), No, Independent/Other, Conservative, Voted Rep	<i>"If you're going to have children YOU should be sure you can take care of them"</i>
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Limit Government Involvement: This segment also believes that generally, government should not be too involved in the everyday lives of Americans.

Respondent Profile	Quote
PA, White, Man, 35 - 54, Urban, High School or Less, \$0 - \$49K, Protestant/Other Christian (Not Roman Catholic), Yes, Republican, Conservative, Voted Rep	<i>"The government should not be involved in regulating any business in terms of pricing. It's bad for the business and the economy. It is also the responsibility of the parent to provide childcare or pay for it if they won't."</i>
MT, White, Woman, 55+, Rural, Some College, \$50K - \$99K, Roman Catholic, No, Independent/Other, Moderate, Voted Dem	<i>"I feel child care is up to the parents and the government should not be involved."</i>
WI, White, Man, 55+, Rural, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, Roman Catholic, No, Independent/Other, Moderate, Did not vote	<i>"It is not up to the government to be micro managing peoples lives from cradle to grave"</i>

Neither Agree nor Disagree

14% of respondents fell into this segment. This segment also values tradition and merit, and believes that most people can get ahead if they're willing to work hard. They have a very individualistic view of society, highlighted by respondent open ends:

Individual responsibility: This segment believes that having a child is an individual choice and therefore an individual responsibility to pay for – those who do not have children should not have to pay taxes to support people who do have children:

Respondent Profile	Quote
WI, White, Woman, 18 - 34, Suburban,	<i>"Your children are your own responsibility, and you</i>

Bachelor's Degree+, \$50K – \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Independent/Other, Moderate, Did not vote	<i>should provide for your own children. If you cannot provide for your children, you shouldn't have chosen to have children."</i>
PA, White, Woman, 35 – 54, Rural, Some College, \$50K – \$99K, Other, No, Republican, Moderate, Voted Rep	<i>"I don't think it's the governments responsibility. I think it's the parents. If you can't afford day care stop having kids!!!"</i>
MT, White, Woman, 35 – 54, Suburban, Some College, \$100K+, Other, No, Republican, Conservative, Voted Rep	<i>"No, there is no benefit for people who cannot or do not want to have children"</i>

Agree

77% of respondents agreed with the key opinion question, highlighting how the majority of Americans do believe in making child care more affordable. This segment values compassion, and believes that the government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people. The themes of their open ended responses highlight these values:

High Cost of Living: This segment emphasizes that the overall cost of living has gotten too high, with child care in particular being inaccessible to many people.

Respondent Profile	Quote
MT, White, Woman, 55+, Rural, High School or Less, \$0 – \$49K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Liberal, Voted Dem	<i>"Everything is so expensive anymore. Being able to pay for child care and not break your bank is the only way some people can survive."</i>
PA, White, Man, 18 – 34, Urban, High School or Less, \$0 – \$49K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Republican, Moderate, Voted Rep	<i>"The cost of living in the country is way to high and child care is even higher"</i>
WI, White, Woman, 18 – 34, Urban, Some College, \$50K – \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Liberal, Voted Dem	<i>"Childcare is very expensive and also necessary for working families, and children shouldn't have to deal with the consequences of the high costs"</i>

Government Responsibility: Unlike the disagree segment that views child care as an issue that is *not* the government's responsibility, this segment is the opposite, feeling as though this is an issue that the government should get involved in.

Respondent Profile	Quote
MT, White, Woman, 35 - 54, Rural, Some College, \$100K+, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Independent/Other, Liberal, Voted Rep	<i>"I say this because I think that if the government hadn't messed things up to the degree it has, families wouldn't NEED help with their child care. Since it is something families need I guess the government should help because it is their fault."</i>
WI, White, Man, 18 - 34, Rural, High School or Less, \$0 - \$49K, Other, No, Independent/Other, Liberal, Did not vote	<i>"Because it's the government's responsibility to foster the ability for children to have effective and affordable access to care services and Healthcare. Families shouldn't have the bill entirely put on them."</i>
WI, White, Man, 18 - 34, Suburban, Bachelor's Degree+, \$50K - \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Liberal, Voted Dem	<i>"The responsibility of the government is to the people, not corporations. It is impossible to make ends meet in the system that has been created by unregulated capitalist greed."</i>

Strengthens the Economy: Respondents in this segment highlighted that creating affordable child care for working families helps not only those individual families, but also helps the economy overall.

Respondent Profile	Quote
WI, White, Woman, 55+, Rural, Some College, \$50K - \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Liberal, Voted Dem	<i>"I think the entire community prospers when the economy prospers. Government aid to working families helps the economy prosper"</i>
WI, Other, Woman, 18 - 34, Rural, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, Other, Yes, Independent/Other, Moderate, Did not vote	<i>"Due to our need for more people in the work force, we need more places for children to be when the parents are working. The cost of child care can sometimes negate the extra income brought in by a parent working a second job. This, in order to support our economy, it is best to lower the cost of child care."</i>
PA, White, Woman, 55+, Suburban, Bachelor's Degree+, \$50K - \$99K, Other, No, Independent/Other, Moderate, Voted Dem	<i>"Helps parents to work which supports a stronger economy."</i>
MT, White, Woman, 18 - 34, Suburban, Bachelor's Degree+, \$0 - \$49K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Independent/Other, Liberal, Voted Dem	<i>"Affordable child care helps the economy by freeing parents income for more personal spending outside of bills. Women in particular will be motivated to have more children if they can afford to pay for child care while they work. Affordable child care gives parents more time</i>

	<i>to work rather than take time away from their job to supervise their children."</i>
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Free vs. Affordable: Even amongst this segment, which believes that the government should help make child care more affordable, a few people voiced concerns over making child care completely free. Instead, words like "affordable" and "accessible" were used more often.

Respondent Profile	Quote
PA, White, Man, 35 – 54, Rural, Some College, \$50K – \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Independent/Other, Moderate, Voted Other	<i>"Some people need more help than is available to them. I don't think everything should be free but a reduced cost would be helpful for many families."</i>
MT, Other, Woman, 18 – 34, Suburban, Bachelor's Degree+, \$0 – \$49K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Liberal, Voted Dem	<i>"Accessible child care enables people to have children financially, which strengthens the community and economy"</i>
WI, White, Woman, 55+, Rural, High School or Less, \$50K – \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Independent/Other, Moderate, Voted Rep	<i>"I think the government should help make child care more affordable for families because people are really struggling out there and prices are rising each day. And jobs are becoming less accessible."</i>

We recommend focusing on the agree segment when developing messages for testing. This segment represents a large partition of the population, and already has a clear interest in making child care affordable. Create messages that focus on each of the themes surfaced by these surveys to understand which theme is the most effective persuasive device when moving people on this issue.

Individual Profiles

Below are individual voter profiles pulled out by state, highlighting the types of voters who would be key targets for a campaign connecting child care affordability to actual candidates and policies. All of these profiles highlight respondents who strongly or somewhat agreed with the key opinion question.

Montana

Demographics	Quotes About Child Care Affordability	Top Values	Top Issues
White, Woman, 55+, Rural, High School or Less, \$0 - \$49K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Liberal, Voted Dem	Everything is so expensive anymore. Being able to pay for childcare and not break your bank is the only way some people can survive.	Emotionality, Patriotism, Group Care	Healthcare, Protecting/ extending abortion access, Gun reform
Other, Woman, 55+, Suburban, Bachelor's Degree+, \$50K - \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Independent/Other, Liberal, Voted Dem	I believe children should have all the advantages a society can afford them. The unintended consequence is that their parents are supported as well. If we want a strong nation, we have to have strong children and strong communities. Community efficacy begins with the strength and sustainability of the families within them.	Emotionality, Independence, Compassion	The economy and jobs, Healthcare, K-12 Education
White, Woman, 55+, Rural, High School or Less, \$0 - \$49K, Protestant/Other Christian (Not Roman Catholic), Yes, Republican, Conservative, Voted Rep	Child care can cost as much as one of the parents makes each month. There needs to be some government help to pay for day care so the parents can work enough to pay the outrageous rent, mortgage, grocery bills.	Nostalgia, Patriotism, Authority	Crime, Healthcare, Protecting 2nd Amendment Rights
White, Woman, 18 - 34, Rural, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Independent/Other, Moderate, Voted Rep	Some areas have childcare that is three or four times what housing costs. That is insane. Childcare in my area is expensive, but not nearly that bad.	Emotionality, Excitement, Achievement	K-12 Education, protecting/ extending abortion access, corruption

Pennsylvania

Demographics	Quotes About Child Care Affordability	Top Values	Top Issues
White, Woman, 55+, Suburban, Bachelor's Degree+, \$100K+, Roman Catholic, No, Democrat, Moderate, Voted Dem	Many families are underemployed because someone has to give up employment to care for young children. If they could find low, cost dependable care they would be able to find employment that would improve their financial situation and contribute to the economy.	Environmentalism, Compassion, Emotionality	Road, bridges and public infrastructure, Healthcare, Voting rights
Black, Woman, 35 - 54,	It's becoming harder and harder to	Achievement,	The economy

Urban, High School or Less, \$0 - \$49K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Moderate, Did not vote	afford just the basic things one needs in order to survive. A lot of people are struggling to attempt to go to work do to simply not having someone reliable to watch their child or children so they can go to interviews to gain employment.	Power	and jobs, Racism
White, Man, 35 - 54, Suburban, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, Protestant/Other Christian (Not Roman Catholic), No, Republican, Moderate, Voted Rep	The government wastes so much money on foreign things, why not use it at home to help our citizens instead. The more people that can get childcare, the more people can work and get the government more tax revenue.	Emotionality, Group care, Power	The economy and jobs
White, Man, 18 - 34, Urban, High School or Less, \$50K - \$99K, None/Atheist/Agnostic, No, Democrat, Moderate, Did not vote	Because I had a girlfriend that used to work 30 hours a week at one job just to pay for child care. then another part time job for gas money car insurance and car payment. It's crazy	N/A	Crime, Protecting/extending abortion access, Corruption

Wisconsin

Demographics	Quotes About Child Care Affordability	Top Values	Top Issues
White, Man, 35 - 54, Suburban, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, Protestant/Other Christian (Not Roman Catholic), No, Democrat, Moderate, Did not vote	Because child care costs are insane. Daycare charges an arm and a leg to watch children. They act like you should give them a third of your paycheck so you can work. Its money that could be used to care for and support said children. If the government could regulate the costs then children would have more at home and families would struggle less to ensure a great childhood for their children.	Power, Excitement	The economy and jobs, Crime, Reducing taxes
White, Woman, 55+, Suburban, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, Roman Catholic, No, Democrat, Liberal, Voted Dem	Blue collar workers need help with childcare because they don't get a lot of income to afford bills.	Emotionality, purity, patriotism	The economy and jobs, roads, bridges, and public infrastructure, climate change
White, Man, 55+, Rural, High School or Less, \$50K - \$99K, Roman Catholic, No, Republican, Conservative, Voted Rep	Child care costs are very expensive and most families need both parents working to keep up with the high inflation.	Merit, Patriotism, Purity	The economy and jobs, Crime, Immigration
White, Woman, 18 - 34,	People should be able to work and have	N/A	Climate change,

Suburban, Some College, \$0 - \$49K, Protestant/Other Christian (Not Roman Catholic), No, Democrat, Liberal, Did not vote	a safe place to send their children based on what they make at their full time job.		Local environment, Gun reform
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