

WAITING

For

CHANGE

Affordable, high-quality child care enables children to flourish and prepare for school; parents to participate in the workforce and obtain the education and training they need to advance, confident that their children are nurtured and safe; and employers to operate free of the workforce instability that lack of reliable child care can cause.

Unfortunately, quality affordable child care is beyond the economic reach of many low-income working mothers. State and federal funding for child care is woefully inadequate; leaving mothers to add their names to a wait list.

Waiting for Change seeks to unearth the challenges mothers face as they wait, including the daily sacrifices and perseverance required to figure out who will care for their children.

Using a participatory action research technique called Photovoice, we asked parents to share a glimpse of their lives through photographs and stories. The photos and excerpts you see here bring light the issues they and their children face because they lack access to subsidized child care.

Armed with this knowledge, we must urge policymakers to seize the opportunity to authentically engage and support working parents to structure a solution that is informed by those whom it will impact.

*This project was made possible by the generous support of the
Economic Development & Justice Giving Circle of the Women's
Foundation of CA*



Child Development



Isabel
-Fresno-



"I worry about my children's education, health and safety and overall well-being...[My son] gets anxious and has trouble focusing and reading in school."

Miriam
-Marin-



"I want a child care place where they can teach her and read books to her....I can't pay anything better than that and that is why I leave her like that."

Dawn
-Contra Costa-



"I can definitely tell the difference in my child's learning ability... she is not getting the child care action like she would be at daycare."

Anna
-Oakland-

"If I had child care, my oldest daughter who is 4 years old, would not have to take on adult responsibilities like changing her sisters diaper."

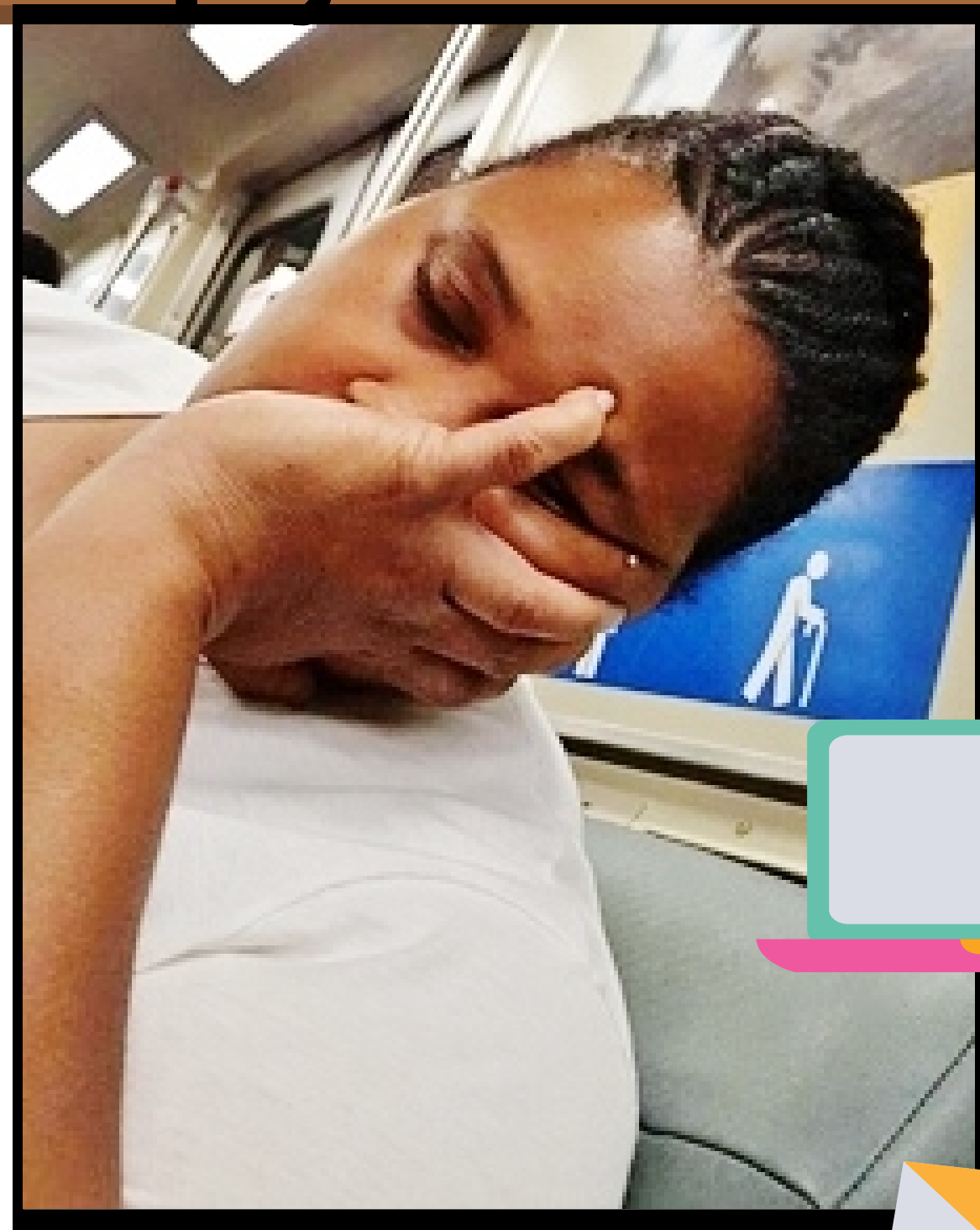




Employment Difficulties



Apryl- Oakland



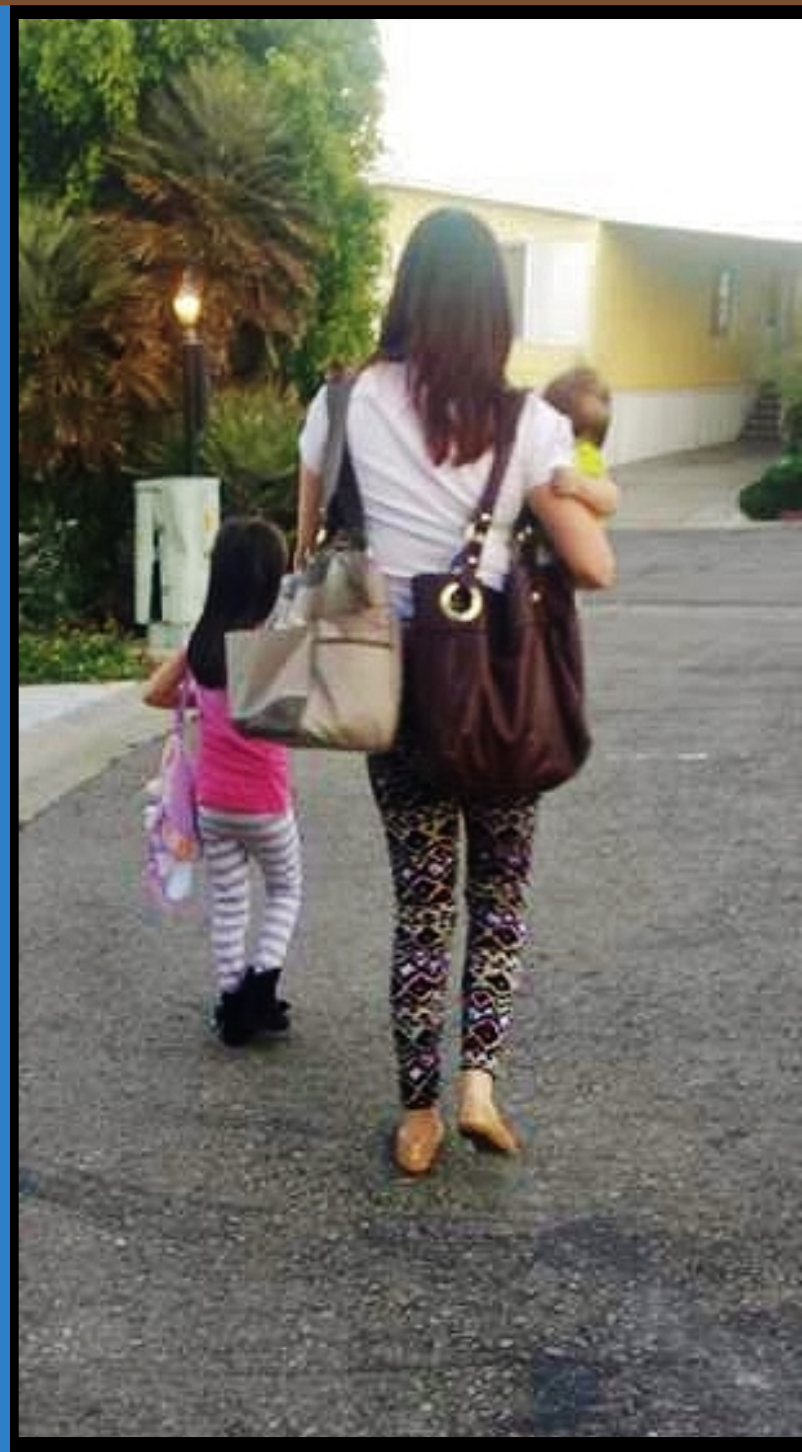
"I gave up a job making \$4,000 per month with travel opportunities because I have no child care."

Vasante- Los Angeles



"It feels so good to have these [two] jobs...[but] if I don't have a babysitter then I can't work so I have to choose one or the other."

Jane Doe- San Diego



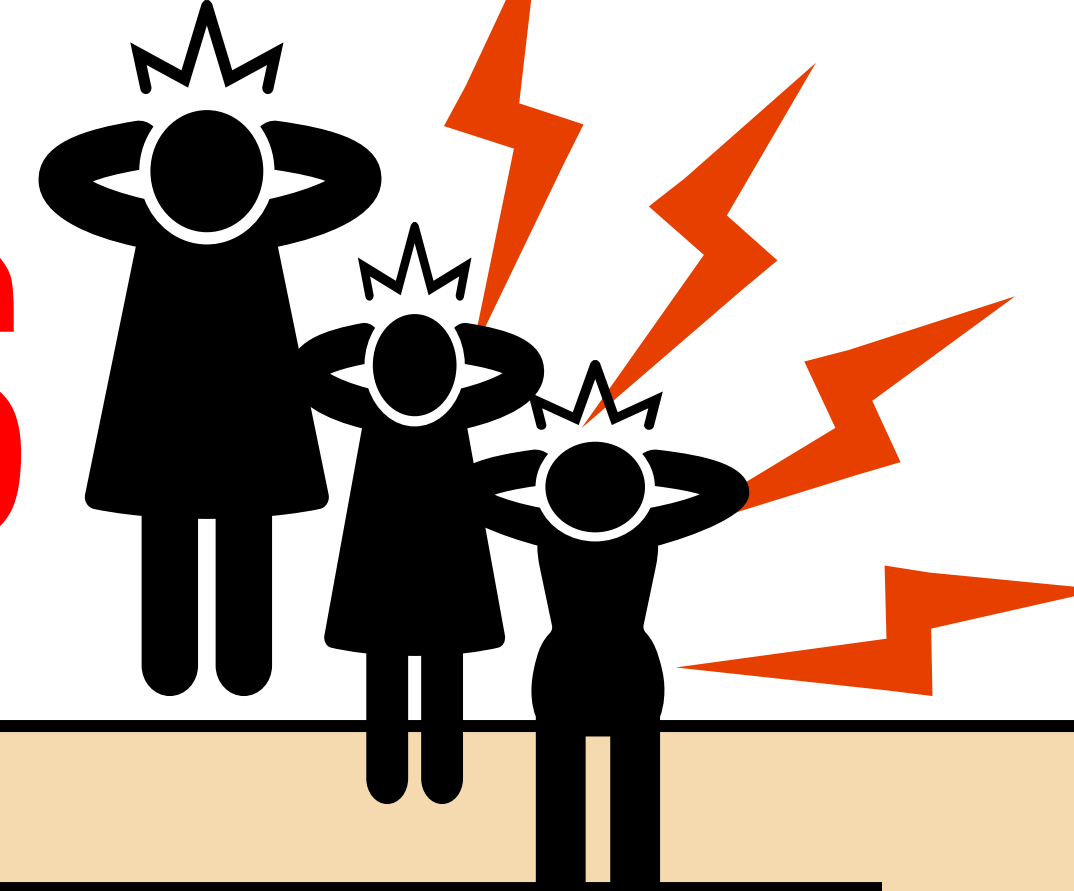
"It's hard to get a job to pay for child care when you don't have money to pay for child care to look for work."

Mary- Marin



"I have had to take my child to work [cleaning houses on her back]...I don't take her everyday just when my babysitter says she can't watch her"

Parental Stress



Vanessa
-San Diego-

"I work from 9 AM-5PM... She's so tired...the long commute [3 hrs total] is hard on a little person...there might be traffic and baby is crying, and I can't melt down in front of the baby. When you walk into work, you need to ...give yourself a 'pep talk'...because you are bitter or angry. And it's not the baby's fault."

Nyccol
-Contra Costa-



"I stress because I can't afford to send my child to daycare so I can't go to a school or get a job."

Shuntera
-Los Angeles-



"When taking this photo I was trying to smile, but I wanted to cry. I am an independent person... if I can work I want to get out there and work my butt off."

Vanessa
-San Francisco-



"The children's shoes. If you walk a day in our shoes, you would be really, really tired."

Jasmine -Fresno-



"Waiting for baby sitter to show up...sometimes up to 1 hour late. I was constantly showing up late to class because I had to rely on family to care for my children since I could not pay a professional person or program"

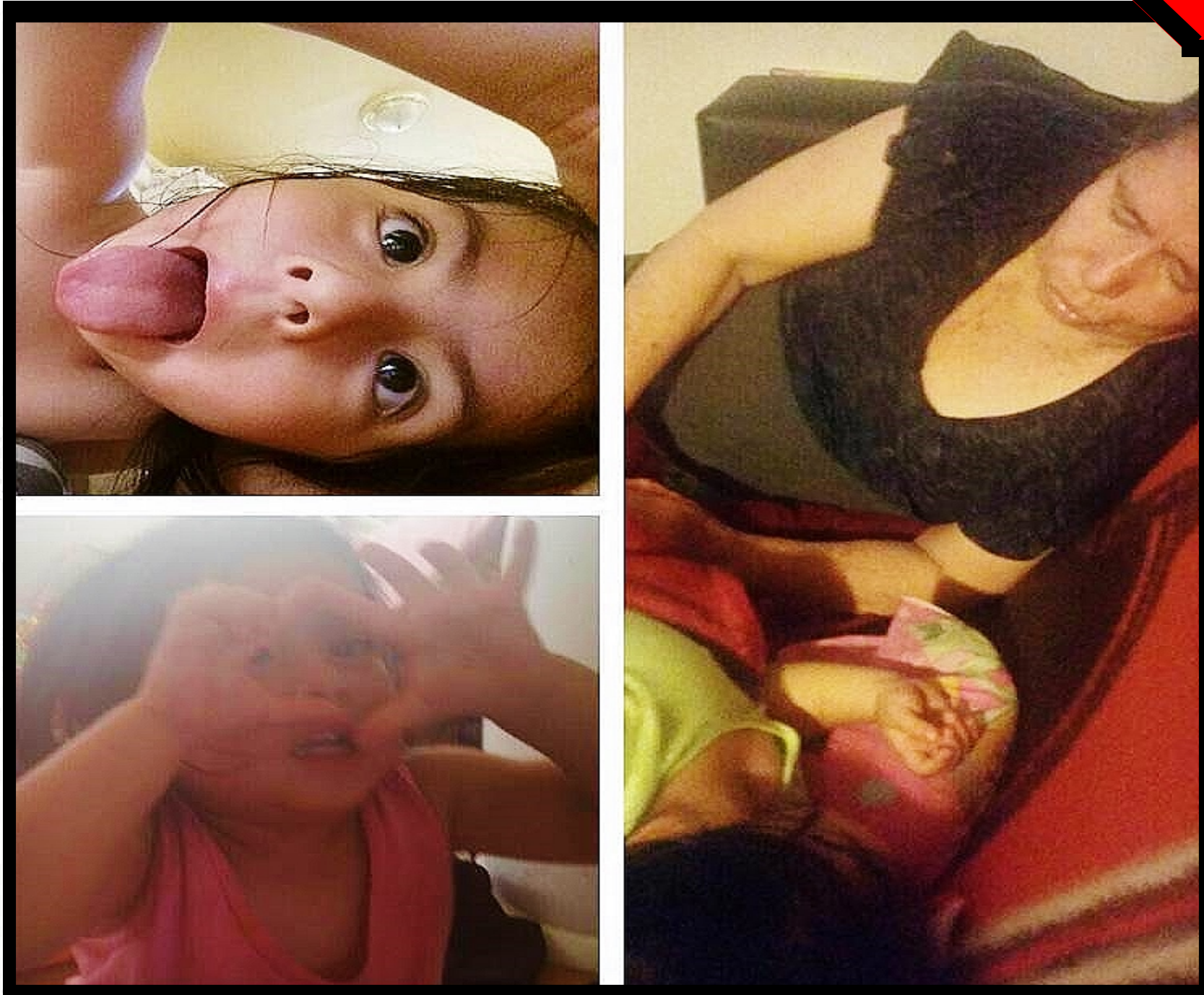
Luz -Marin-



"When I arrived to the babysitters house and they were [watching TV and] still in their pajamas... [this makes me angry] because I took a backpack with clothes for them to wear and be changed!!"

Child Care Difficulties

Anna -Oakland-



"My mother is 70 years old so it's very tough on her. They get to bed very late each night, and don't get enough sleep....Everyone is always angry at each other because no one in the family are sleeping."

Claudia -San Francisco-



"My daughter is in the school yard – waiting before mom gets there... She wished she can play with other kids in the programs..."

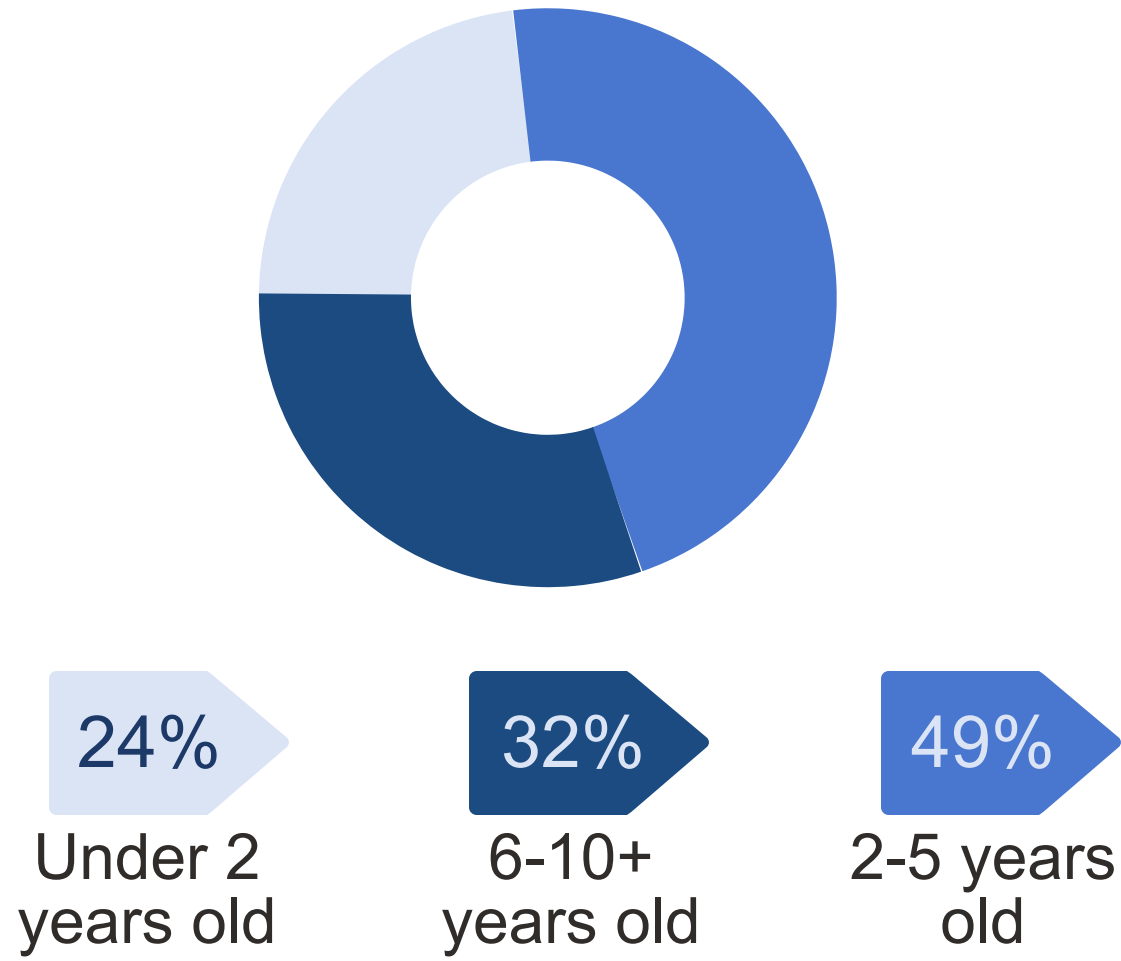
WAITING FOR CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

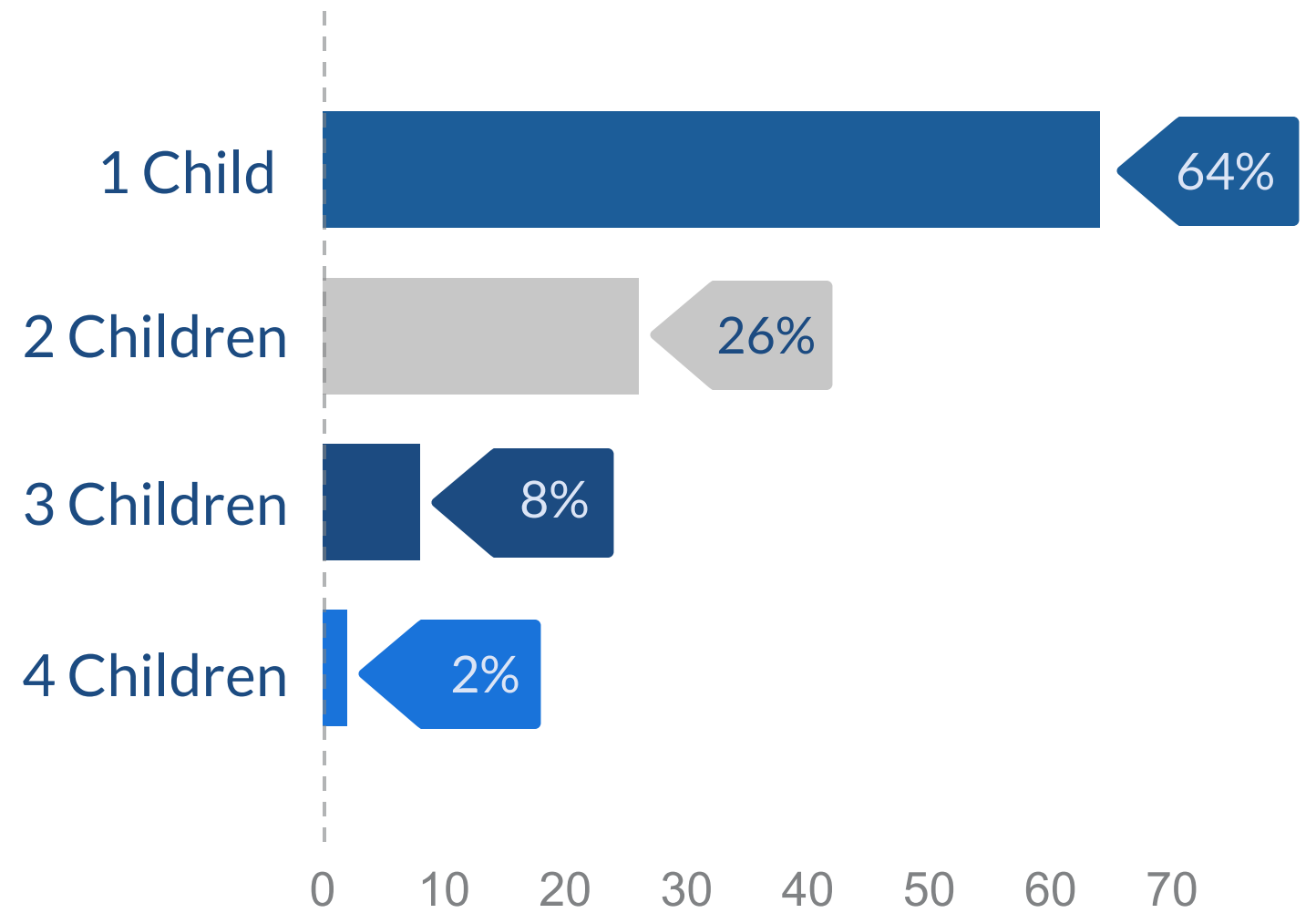
125 parents on the waiting list in California participated in a survey designed to learn about the impact of being on the waiting list for child care. This brief report details the findings from that survey.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

AGES OF CHILDREN



NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE HOME

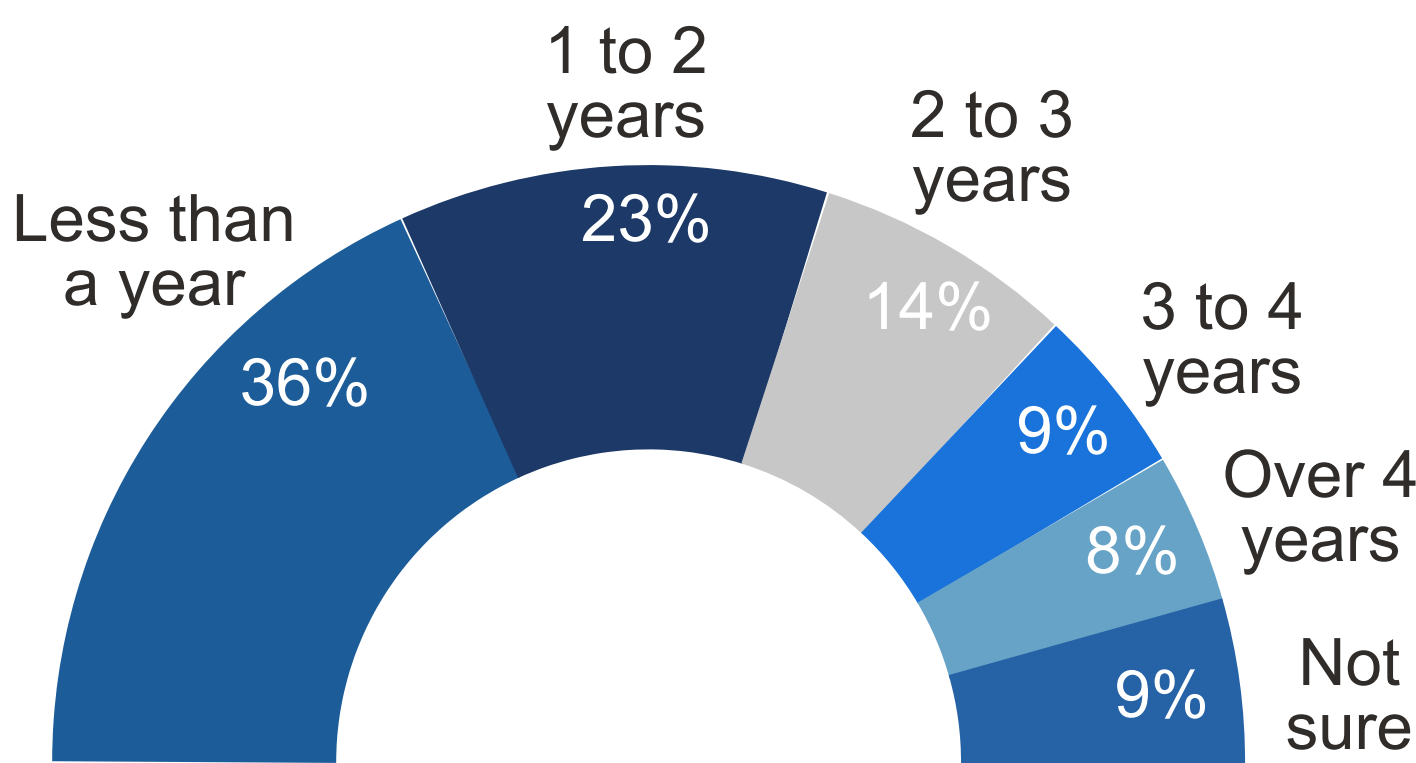


PARENT STORY

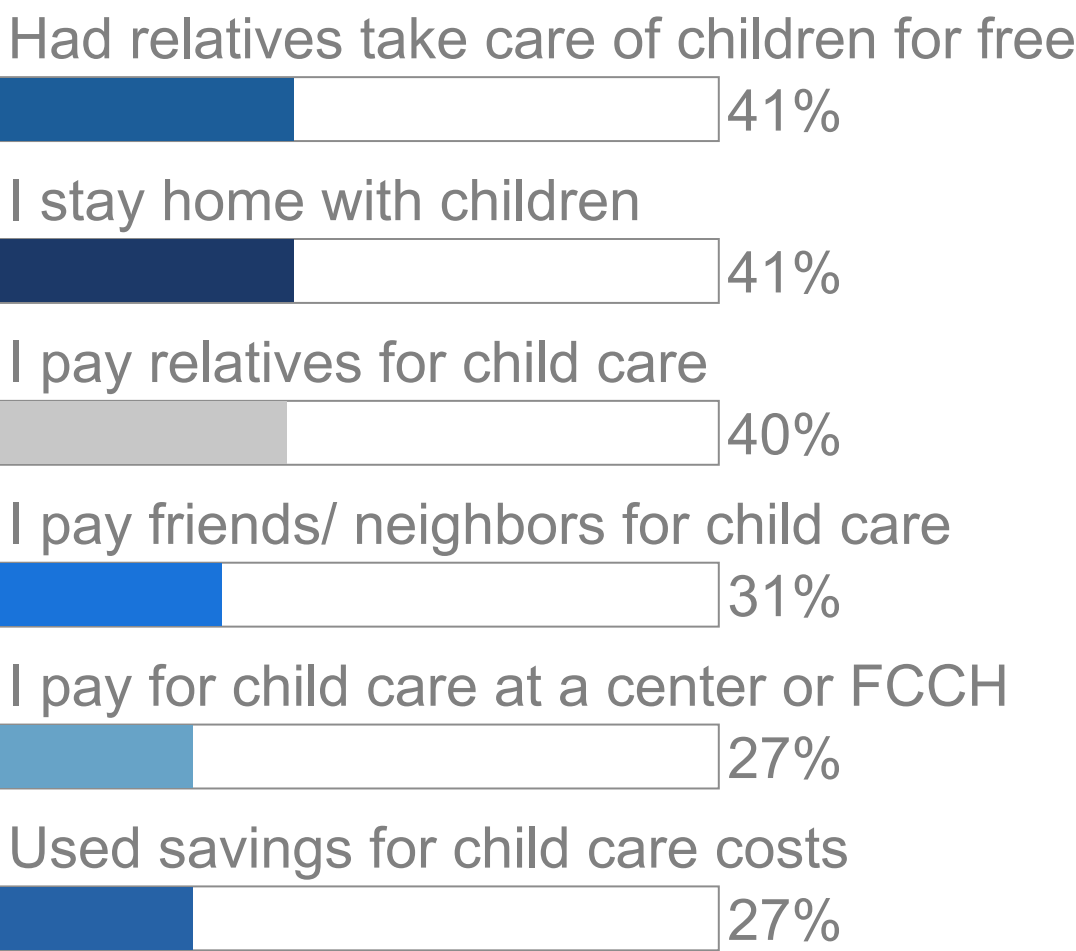
"I am a single mom who struggles to cover all costs of living for my two children. I accept overtime hours at work to try to make some extra money; but extra hours at work means extra child care costs. While making some extra money seems like a great idea, it also deters me from getting programs like free/ reduced lunch."

WHILE ON THE WAITING LIST

TIME ON WAITING LIST



CHILD CARE WHILE WAITING:



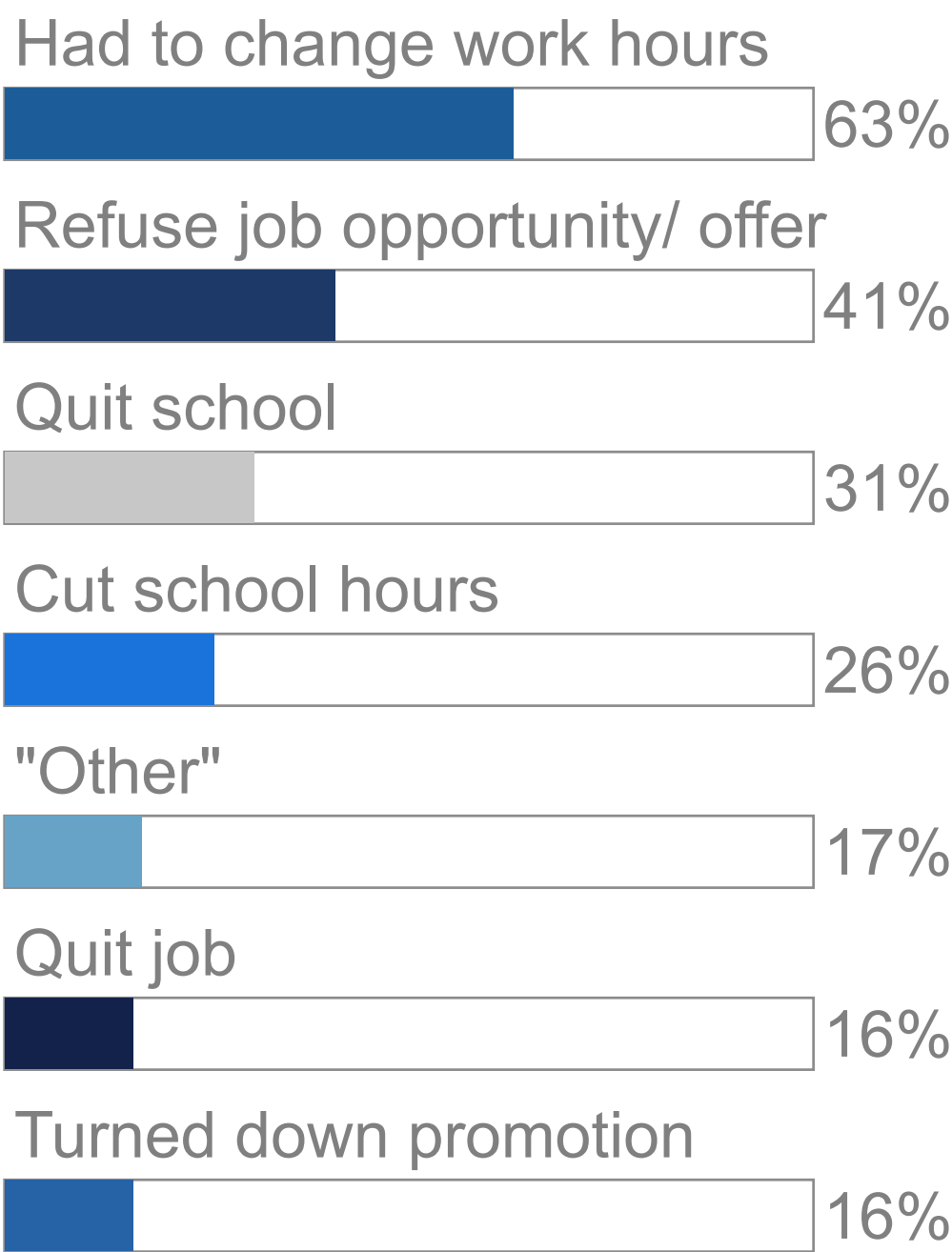
Note: This is a "check all that apply" question and parents were able to select more than more option.

MULTIPLE CHILD CARE METHODS USED

- > "Stay at home with child while other parent works. Got loan to pay for rent."
- > "Spouse stays home."
- > "Delay paying bills to pay for child care first."
- > "Child goes to work with parent. Work where they live."

LACK OF SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE REQUIRES SACRIFICES

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES



78% of parents had to make changes to their job or education.

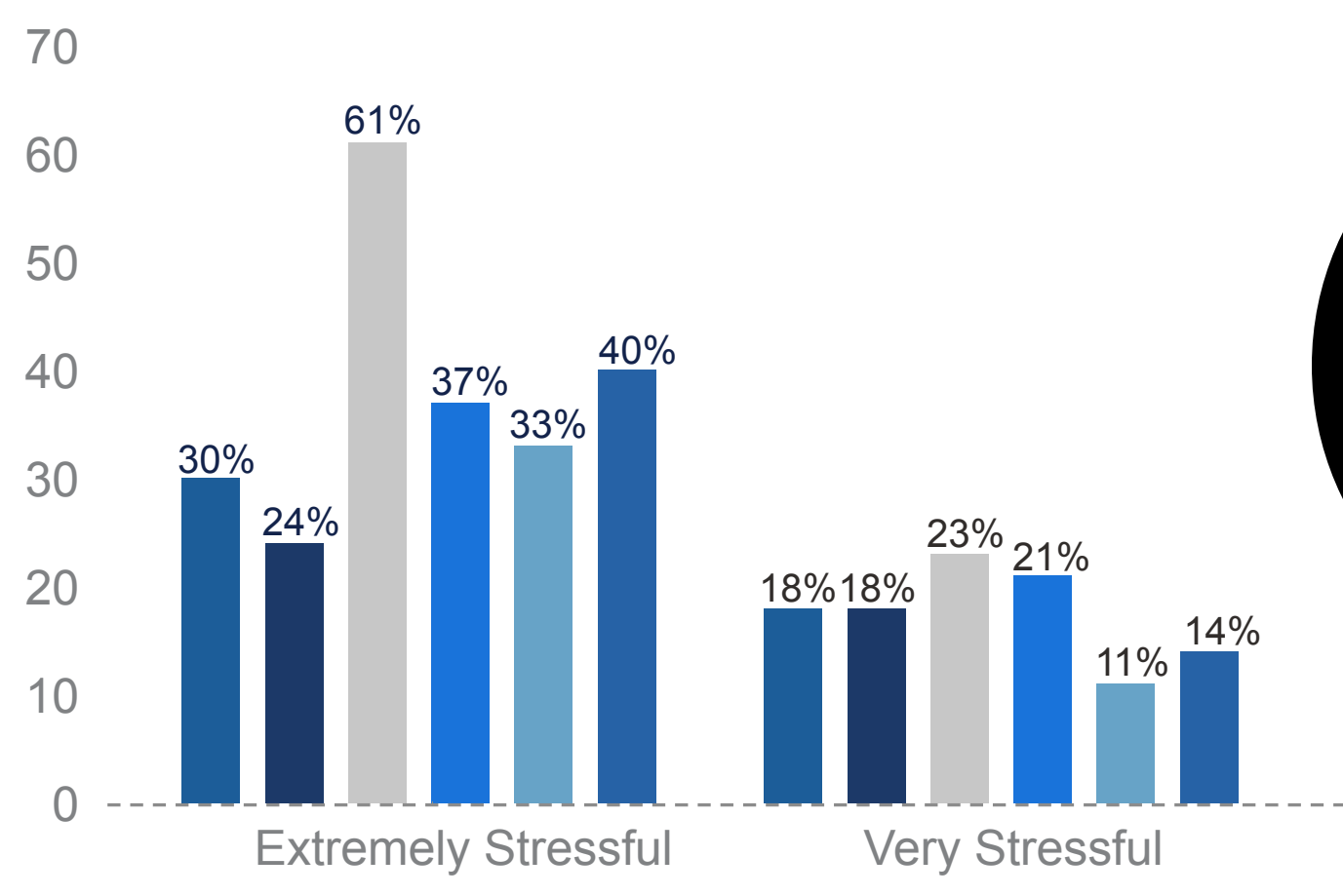
62% of parents had to make 2 or more changes to their job or education.

Responses for the "other" category:
"discontinue higher education"
"[get] second job"
"took a year off work"
"take night classes"
"delay job search"

Note: This is a "check all that apply" question and parents were able to select more than more option.

PARENTAL STRESS WHILE ON THE WAITLIST

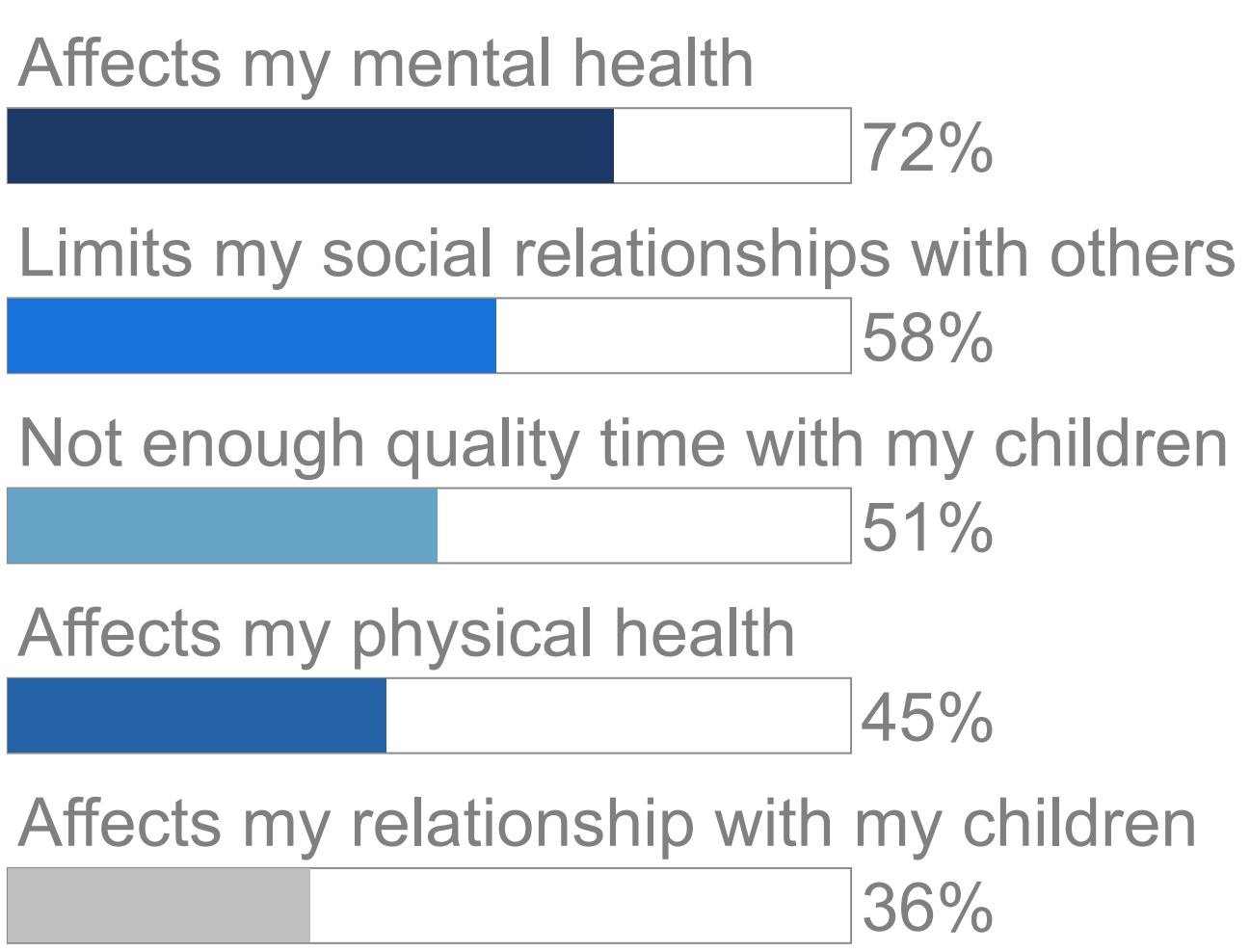
- Paying for transportation
- Time spent on transportation
- Paying for living expenses
- Keeping your job
- Finding a job
- Continuing with education



89%
of parents are experiencing stress

Note: This is a "check all that apply" question and parents were able to select more than more option.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF STRESS



"Affects my financial situation. I need to start working but I have no one to watch my son."

"Affects my job, additional stress of getting fired because I am the only employee that has to take time off due to lack of child care."

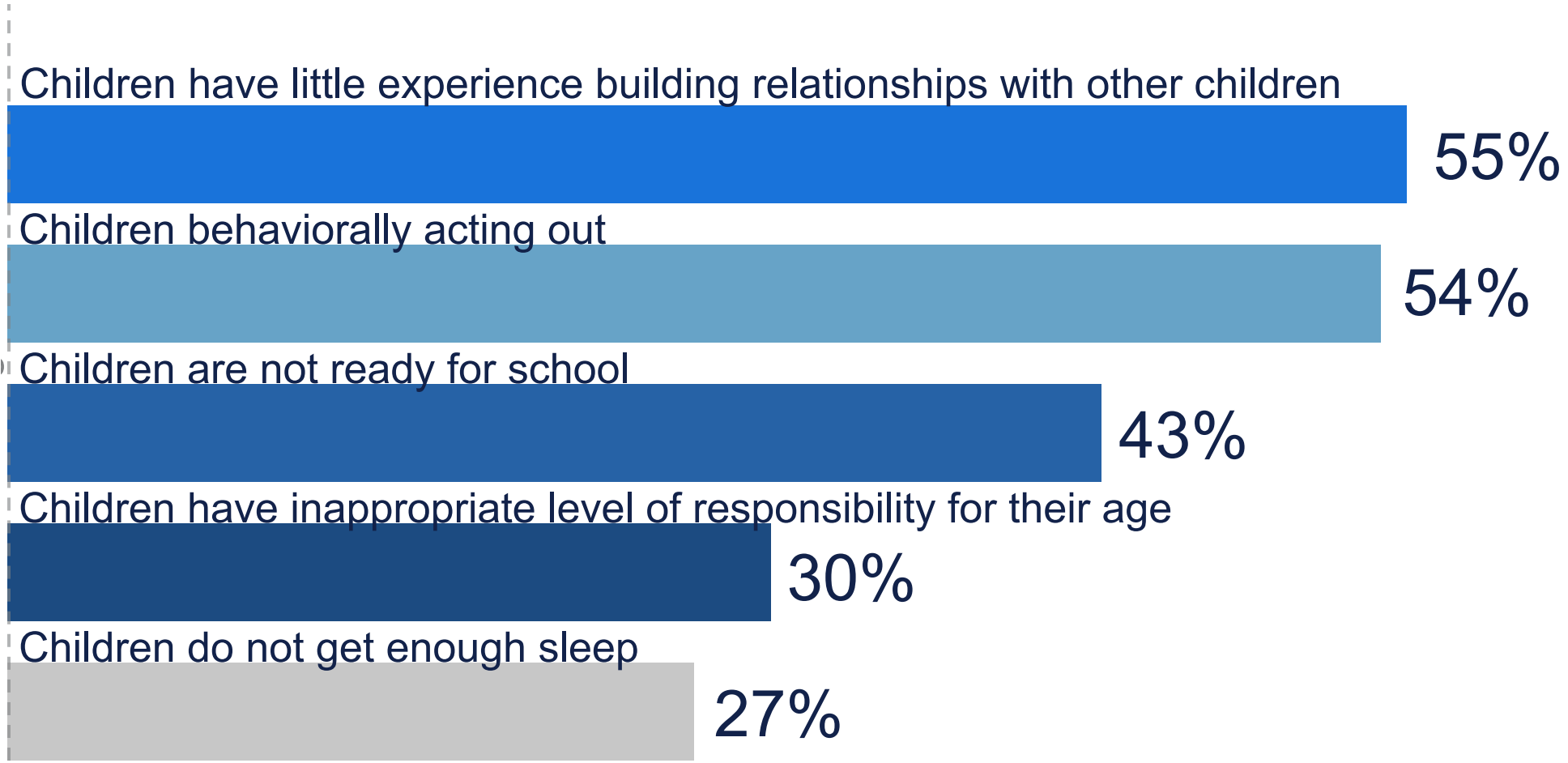
"Unable to find work that covers child care costs so might as well stay home, but that means no money coming in from one side. Catch 22. It's a constant struggle with no way to catch up."

Note: This is a "check all that apply" question and parents were able to select more than more option.

➤ 50% of parents selected 3 or more areas of stress

WORRIES ABOUT CHILD'S WELL-BEING

66%
of parents worry about their child's well-being



Note: This is a "check all that apply" question and parents were able to select more than more option.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CHILD CARE DECISIONS

Choosing Child Care:	%
Care offered for more than 3 hours per day	77%
Commute time from work/ home/ school	73%
Evening care (after 7pm)	29%
Care during the weekend	27%
Access to public transportation	18%
Overnight care	5%



Cost of care was also mentioned:

"Cost/ price"

"Cost of care over the summer for 2-3 children full day."

OTHER NEEDS

86%

of parents would like to know about other programs

Type of Financial Assistance Needed	%
Housing assistance	69%
Cal fresh (food stamps)	43%
Food bank or pantry	30%
Health care	27%
Employment assistance	24%
Supportive services for children with special needs	8%
Supportive services for formerly incarcerated parents	1%

PARENT EXPERIENCES

"I'm about to be homeless because I can't pay any of the bills this month including my rent because I haven't been able to work fully because of child care."

"I'm on the verge of [losing] everything because I cannot get the assistance needed. The system is backwards. why do we have to lose everything before getting the help we need?"

"Sometimes we don't know other services we might qualify for."
"Any available services, housing, food, jobs, school, school supplies, and grants."

Contact Information: Mary Ignatius
Parent Voices Statewide Organizer
mary@parentvoices.org