



The COVID-Related Caregiving Pivot and Waning Employee Performance

COVID-19 has greatly impacted the child care industry in a way no one could have predicted. A recent study from the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#), which surveyed more than 5,000 child care providers in July 2020, found 18% of child care centers and 9% of family child care homes remain closed. As employees struggle to balance work and child care responsibilities, the impact on employers is costly and comes in the form of increased turnover and absenteeism, as well as decreased productivity.

Prior to COVID-19, the U.S. was already facing a child care crisis with many Americans struggling to access reliable and affordable care. According to the White House, since 2005 the overall number of licensed child care providers in the U.S. has [decreased by 30%](#). To further exacerbate the issue, [PBS News Hour reported](#) half of the U.S. population lives in areas lacking enough child care providers, disproportionately affecting low-income families and communities of color.

Prior to COVID-19, the U.S. was already facing a child care crisis with many Americans struggling to access reliable and affordable care.

With access to child care now more limited and more costly than ever, employees have had to rearrange their schedules, trade off child care responsibilities with partners and family members, work flexible schedules, or come up with other temporary solutions. This has taken its toll on employees who have reported increases in stress and anxiety. With many schools unlikely to fully reopen in person any time soon, there is additional pressure on working caregivers to find solutions. Many people who otherwise only needed after school child care are now looking for full-time child care, and trying to find solutions for supplemental education needs such as tutoring and homeschooling.

Caregiving isn't limited to employees with children, however. Those without children

may also have responsibilities to care for a family member or loved one, and may have similar challenges finding and maintaining care or backup care. These employees may be less inclined to discuss their needs with their employer.

Employers Play a Role in the Solution

Surprisingly, employers play a key role in the solution. It starts by supporting your employees and talking about leave and flexible work arrangements, and providing benefits for child care and caregiving navigation services. Consider caregiving broadly and develop inclusive family caregiving policies. It's also important to enhance your communication practices by sharing helpful resources and reminding employees about their benefits and well-being programs. Ultimately, a partnership between the employer and employee is the key to making accommodations and flexible work arrangements successful.

Regardless of the approach your organization takes to address the caregiving issue, in order to minimize liability and provide employees with a full array of options, it is imperative to take into account applicable leave mandates and formulate approaches with those mandates in mind.

Learn how you can support your employees with our latest whitepaper, *Emerging Considerations in Caregiving – A Closer Look at the COVID-19 Landscape*. You'll gain relevant insights on:

- Employer leave mandates and what your organization is required to provide
- Flexible work arrangements and well-being benefits
- Resources and navigation services for childcare and school-aged children

Ask your Alliant Representative for a copy or [contact us here](#).

Leading with compassion and thoughtful planning as we head into the next phase of the pandemic is imperative. These insights may help you choose the best path for your organization.

Disclaimer: *This material is provided for informational purposes only. Alliant Insurance Services does not provide legal or medical advice or legal or medical opinions. Please seek the services of your own independent legal, tax, and other advisors regarding your particular situation before taking action.*