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# Hawaii Parents Grapple with Lack of Flexible Work Hours if Children Do Not Return to School

By ASHLEY MIZUO • JUL 23, 2020

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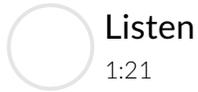
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About 60% of Hawaii parents said in a survey, their employer would not offer flexible hours to meet their children's school and child care schedule.



The survey of over 700 Hawaii families was conducted by the Hawaii Children's Action Network and the After School Alliance, both childrens' advocacy groups.

Hi-CAN's director of public policy, Kathleen Algire said parents are faced with the hard choice of going to work or watching their kids.

"We understood that without child care, parents could not go back to work. And I think that people need to expand what child care is to include our kindergarten through sixth graders, possibly middle schoolers as well," she said.

"Our school system has kind of become part of our child care system. And so any change to that we really do need to make sure that we have solutions."

Many schools are opting for a mix of in-person and distance learning and many parents are unsure of what to do on days when their children are not in school.

About 70% of parents were also concerned about the potential scheduling conflicts between their children who attend different schools.

Algire said Hawaii could look to New York for solutions (<https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2020/07/16/city-plans-child-care-for-100-000-kids-when-schools-partially-reopen-1301436>). New York will offer childcare on days when children are not in school, utilizing libraries and community centers.

Hawaii public schools are scheduled to reopen on August 4th -- although there have been calls by the teachers union and others to push back that date.

Almost all respondents to the survey, 96% of parents, said they would be concerned about their child's physical health upon returning to in-person class.

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