

Membership Report

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The membership office asks organizational members to report significant changes to their programs every year and we typically receive a handful of reports. When we sent out our substantive change survey this fall we expected a large response and we did, in fact, hear back from 70% of our member programs.

As expected, the majority of change reported was in response to the COVID pandemic. Almost all programs reported at least a few of the following common changes: increased (in some cases exclusive) time outdoors, masking of children and/or educators, decreased program hours, isolated cohorts/pods, different mix of ages due to isolated cohorts/pods, closed parent and child programs, minimized or eliminated after school programs, changes to how/if food is served, virtual meetings, no parents in buildings, limited to no community festival celebrations, increased staff hours for cleaning or in order to maintain pods, some online programming.

Almost half of all respondents reported a reduction in enrollment of more than 25%, attributed to families leaving for health reasons and space restrictions limiting enrollment. 5% reported an increase of more than 25% enrollment, primarily attributed to families moving out of urban areas to more rural settings and parents looking for in-person programs. Three of our member programs have closed for the school year due to COVID restrictions and have plans to reopen in the future. Overall, our enrollment across the association is down about 30% this year.

We are deeply grateful for your responses to the survey, which helped us better understand the impact of COVID on our member programs. The incredible flexibility shown by our movement to adapt to the needs of our time is remarkable. We have been inspired to see how so many of you made considerable changes on very short notice, embraced a new way of working and found ways in which to maintain your focus on the children as you made difficult decisions. The children that are being served by WECAN programs are benefitting tremendously from your love and care. Many thanks for all your hard work!