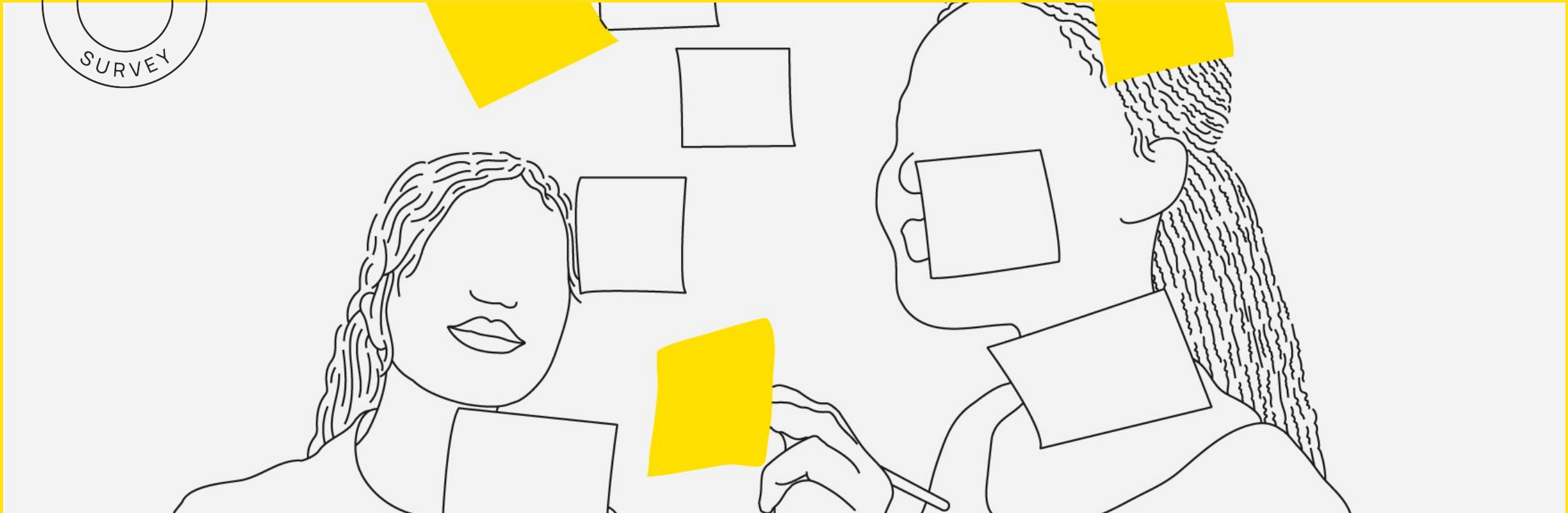


RAPID Survey Findings: Experiences of Families



April 2026



Stanford
Center on Early Childhood

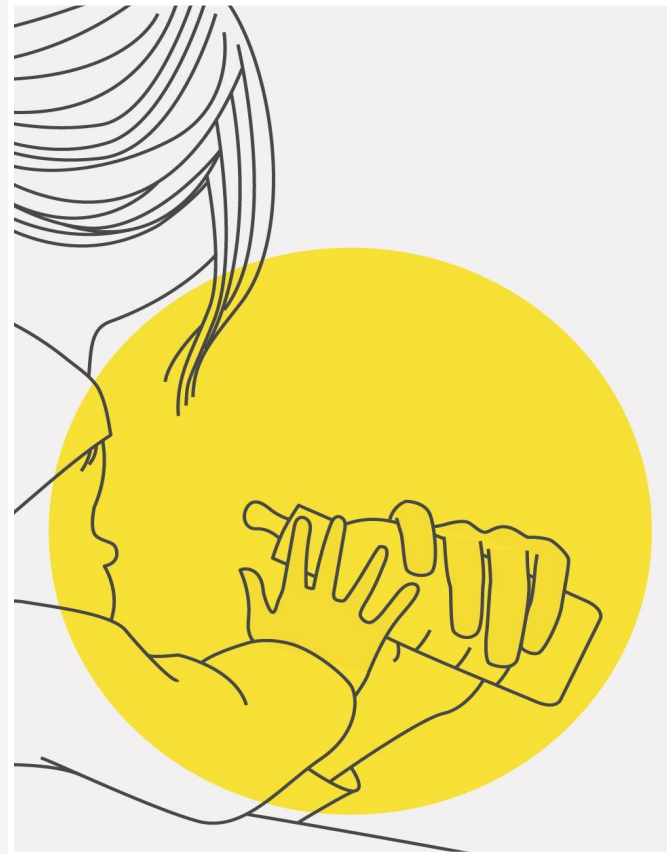
Overview of RAPID's national surveys

- Ongoing survey of households with at least one child under age 6 launched **in April 2020** to understand experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Added parallel **national child care provider survey** in 2021
- Tool to **elevate voices of adults in young children's lives**; provide timely and actionable data, and promote data-informed programs, advocacy, and policymaking
- **26,000+ parents** and **8,100+ providers** in all 50 states
- **15-minute paid questionnaire** completed via computer or smartphone in English or Spanish

National survey content

Household survey core:

- Demographic information
- Child care (access and use, preference, challenges)
- Material hardship
- Food insecurity
- Child & parent well-being
- Open-ended questions



Provider survey core:

- Demographic information
- Provider well-being & working conditions
- Material hardship
- Food insecurity
- Health care
- Open-ended questions

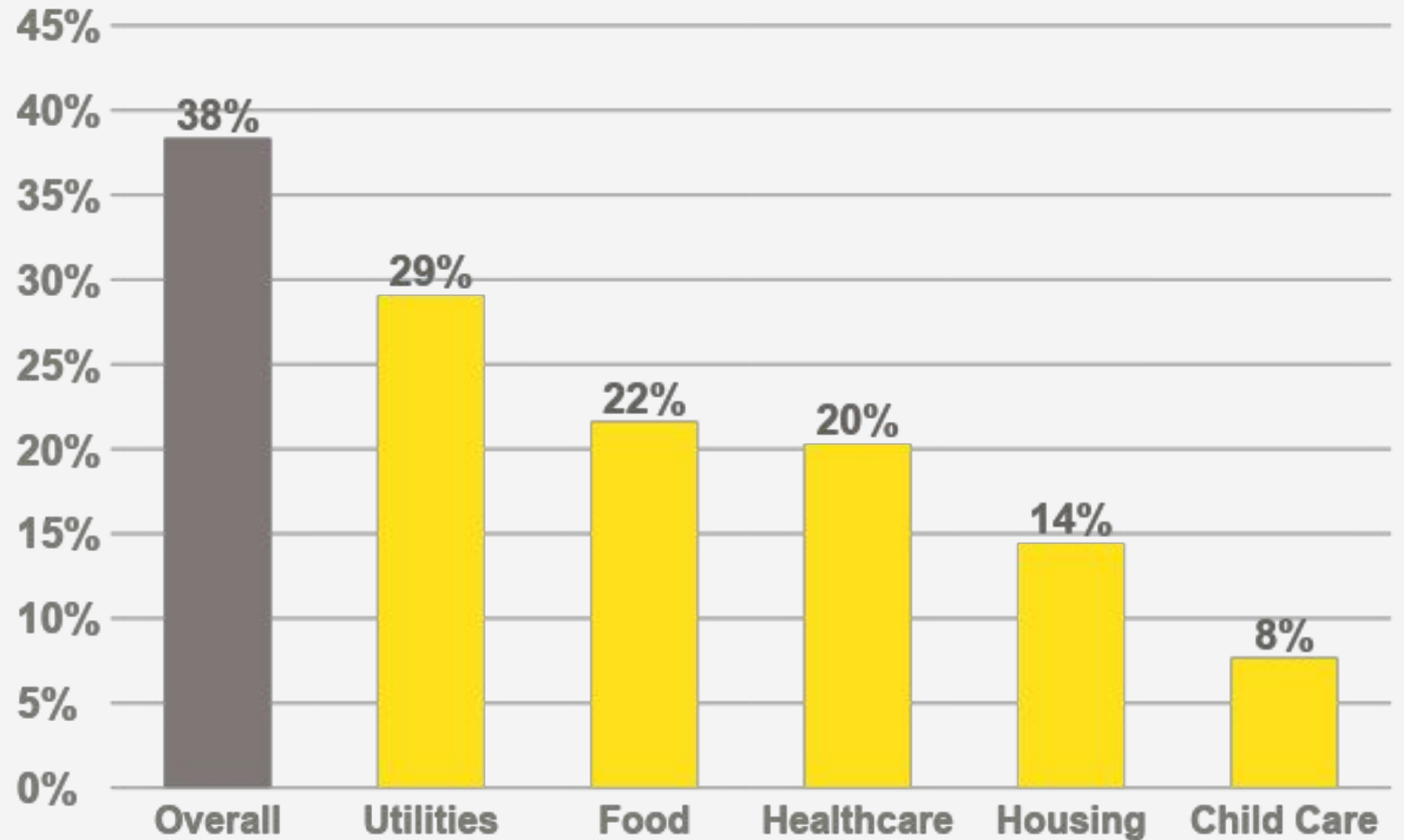
...and new topical modules added regularly!

Parent Material Hardship



Nearly 2 in 5 parents report experiencing some form of material hardship

Parent material hardship by source of hardship



In their own words: Parents tell RAPID about their experiences of material hardship

Cost of living. We are worried that our rent is going to be raised higher. Also cost of food. Because most of our income goes to housing and bills, there is little left for medical, food, or recreation.
— Parent in Arizona

"Having enough money for everything. Our housing went up \$300 when our lease renewed and any sort of healthy foods cost an arm and a leg. The kids mostly eat cheap junk because that's what we can afford."
- Parent in Illinois

I was laid off from my job in November and have been unable to find more work in my field. I'm waiting tables in a restaurant, but it doesn't pay enough money even to cover the child care tuition fees."
— Parent in Maryland

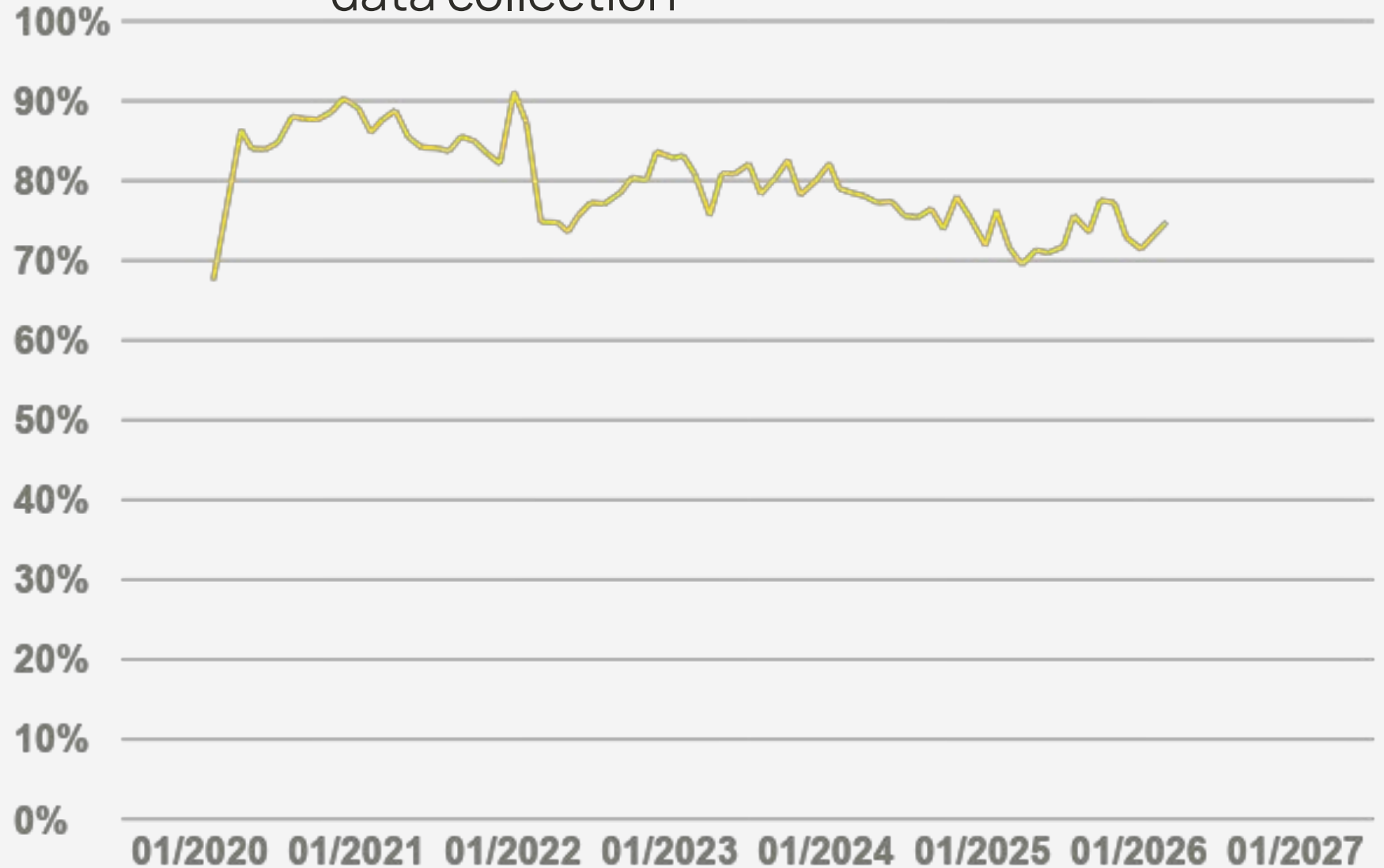
Despite making as much money as we do, we still have to be really careful due to the cost of housing, food, and especially child care. We make almost \$250,000 a year and still feel the pinch.
— Parent in New York

Emotional Distress



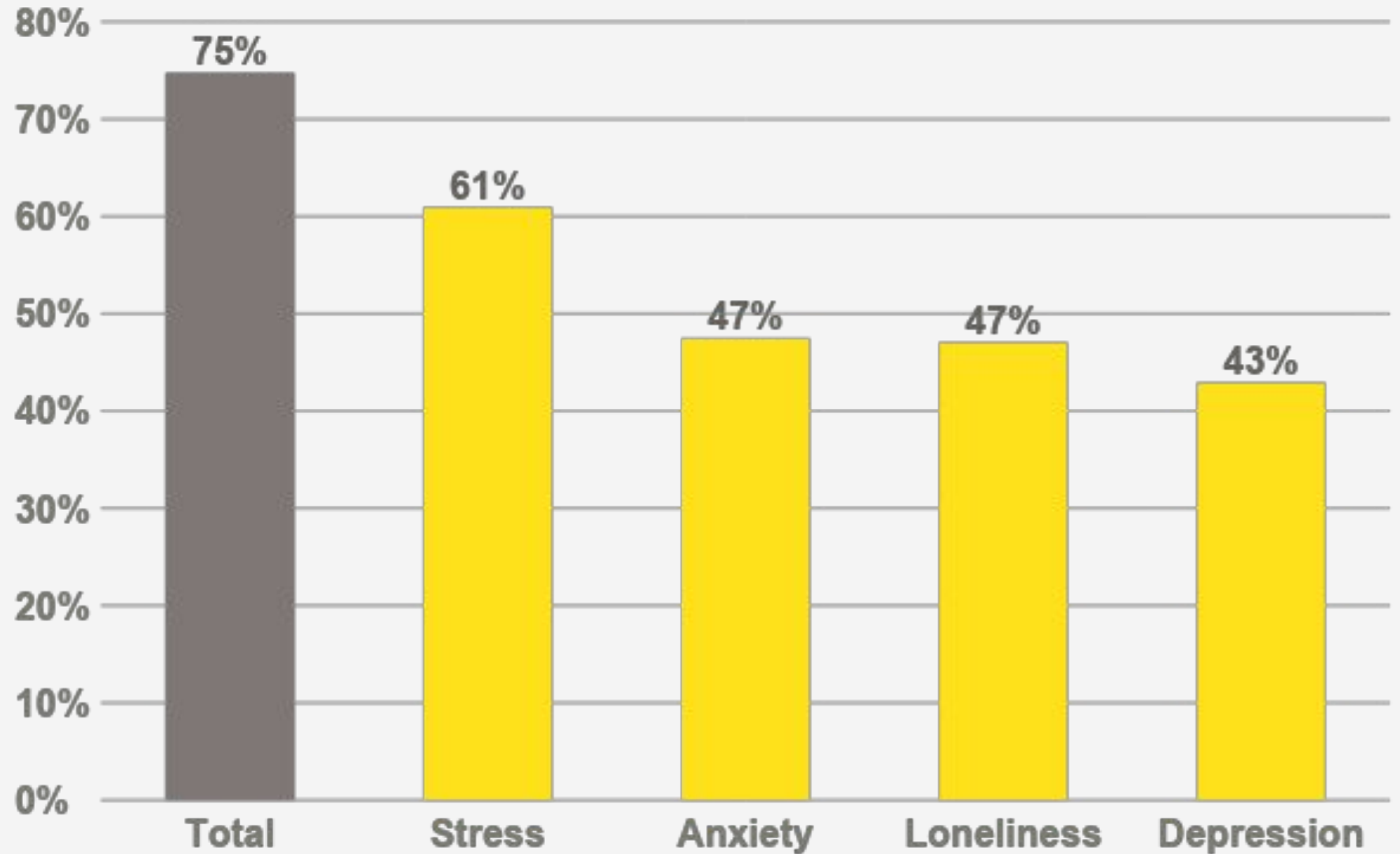
Parent emotional distress has remained persistently high over 6 years of data collection

Parent Emotional distress



3 in 4 parents report experiencing emotional distress

Parent Emotional distress



Parenting under stress: what families tell us

The general instability of our government and geopolitical situation. It adds stress to adults' lives and makes it harder to be present and patient parents. We are fearful and also struggling to explain these things to our kids.

– Parent in Washington

My husband and I often feel overwhelmed and stressed out trying to work full time and take care of our house and kids and all the things that come with it.

– Parent in Maryland

Political instability feels overwhelming. My mother is an immigrant and that feels precarious right now.

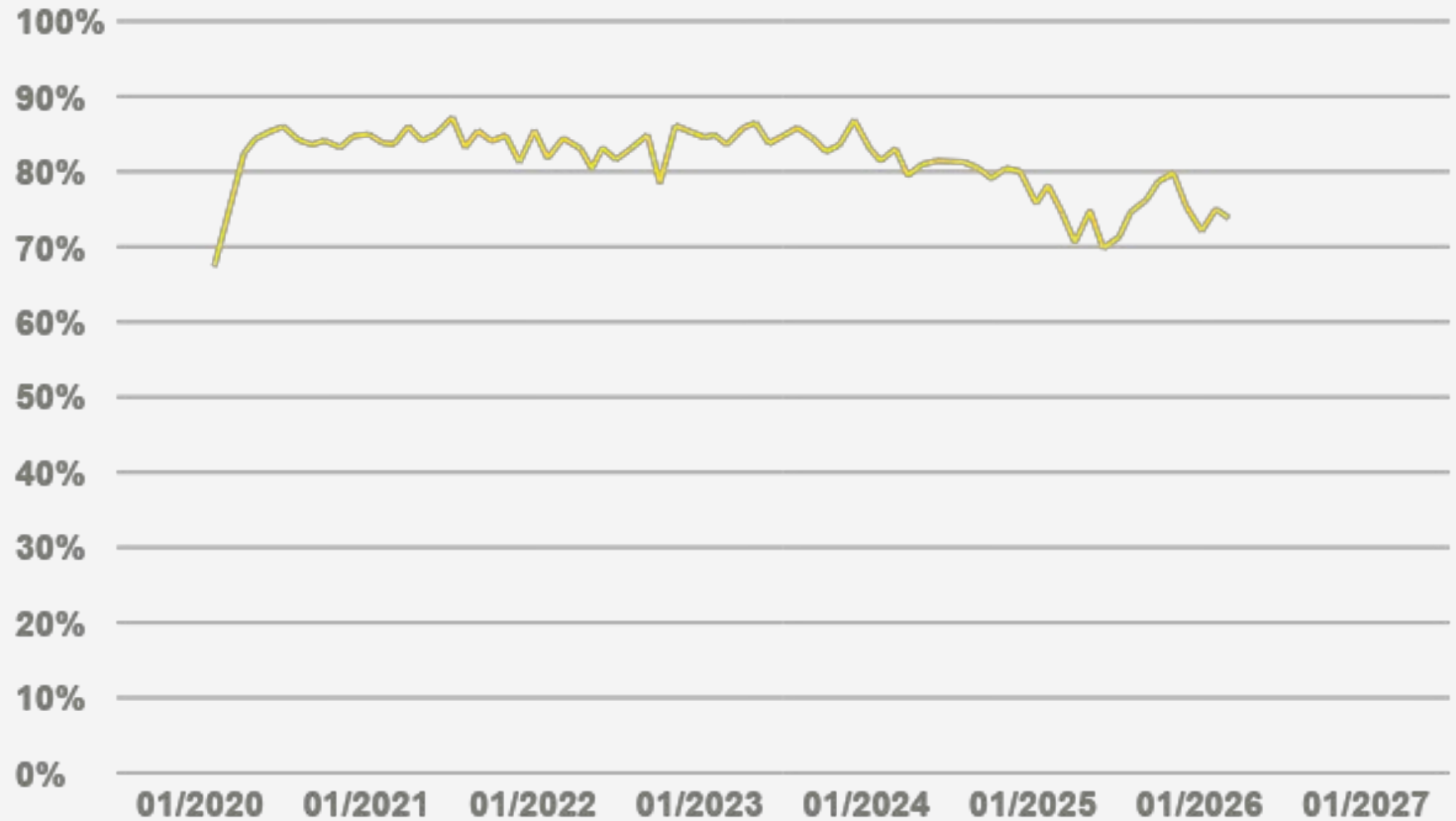
– Parent in Indiana

My main concerns involve my own mental health, as the sustained demands of parenting a young child create significant challenges in managing stress and anxiety.

– Parent in California

Parents' reports of children's emotional and behavioral problems have remained persistently high over 6 years of data collection

Parents' reports of children's emotional and behavioral problems



When little ones feel the weight, parents' reports

Navigating the transition as our 4yo changes from daycare to public pre-K. Transitions are really hard at this age, especially for this particular kiddo. She's having trouble sleeping; crying more; expressing big worries.

-Parent in New Mexico

We're concerned about our children's ability to manage stress, emotions, and social relationships in today's world.

-Parent in Alabama

Our oldest child is 5 years old and starts kindergarten this fall; he is nervous about this new step because he is leaving old friends and will be in a new school. We are worried about this because the lack of security at the school compared to our child care center - we worry about gun violence and the influence of other children on our child, especially bullies.

-Parent in Wisconsin

Thank you

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