

# Who Recertifies, and What Helps Them?

Perspectives from New Mexico Families on their Child Care  
Assistance Recertification Experiences

Presented by Hailey Heinz to the Child Care and Early Education  
Policy Research Consortium, June 2023



CRADLE TO CAREER  
POLICY INSTITUTE

# Study Background & Questions

- Mixed-method strand of a 2019 Child Care Policy Research Partnership Grant
- Research Questions:
  - *What facilitates enrollment continuity for families?*
    - *What family characteristics are associated with smooth renewal?*
    - *What aspects of the recertification process facilitate or prevent renewal of benefits?*

# Survey Approach

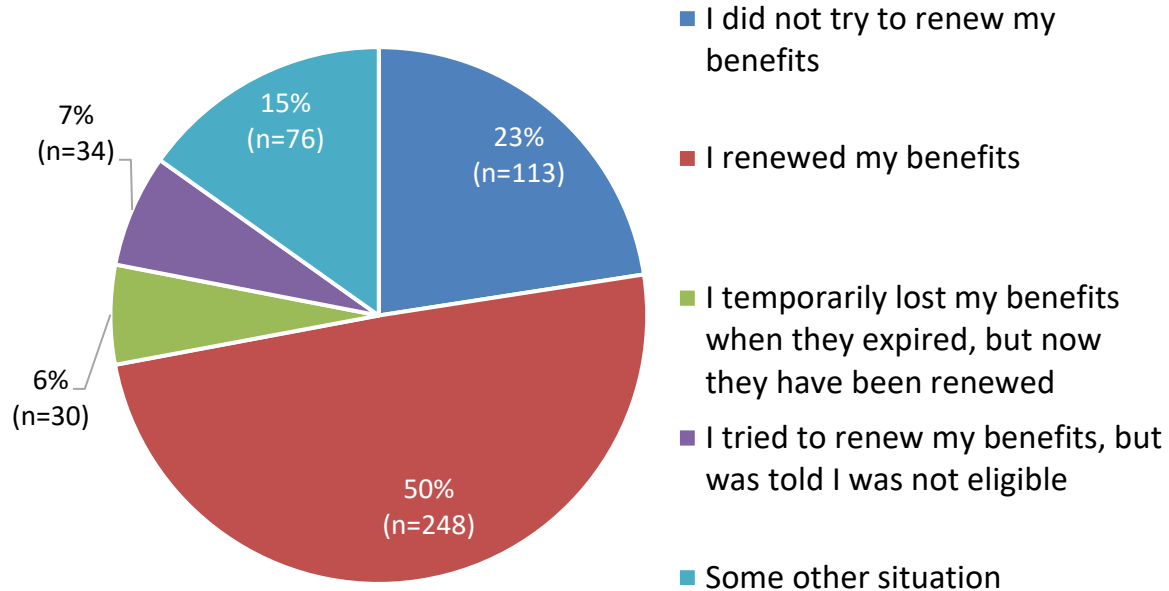
- Survey
  - Online and phone survey in English and Spanish
  - Of families who have reached a redetermination point
  - Sampled geographically for statewide representativeness
  - Questions about recertification experience, outcome, and impacts on the family

# Interview Approach

- Follow-up Interviews
  - Within survey sample, participants volunteered for follow-up interviews
  - Interviews conducted in English or Spanish
  - In-depth, additional details about family recertification experiences & impacts

# Survey Results: The Sample

- 501 complete surveys
- 460 in English, 41 in Spanish
- 2021-2022



# Renewers and Non-Renewers

- Renewers are:
  - More likely to be working full time
  - Lower income
  - Lower educational attainment
  - Have more preschool-aged children on average
  - More likely to identify as Hispanic



# Predictors of Renewal Outcomes

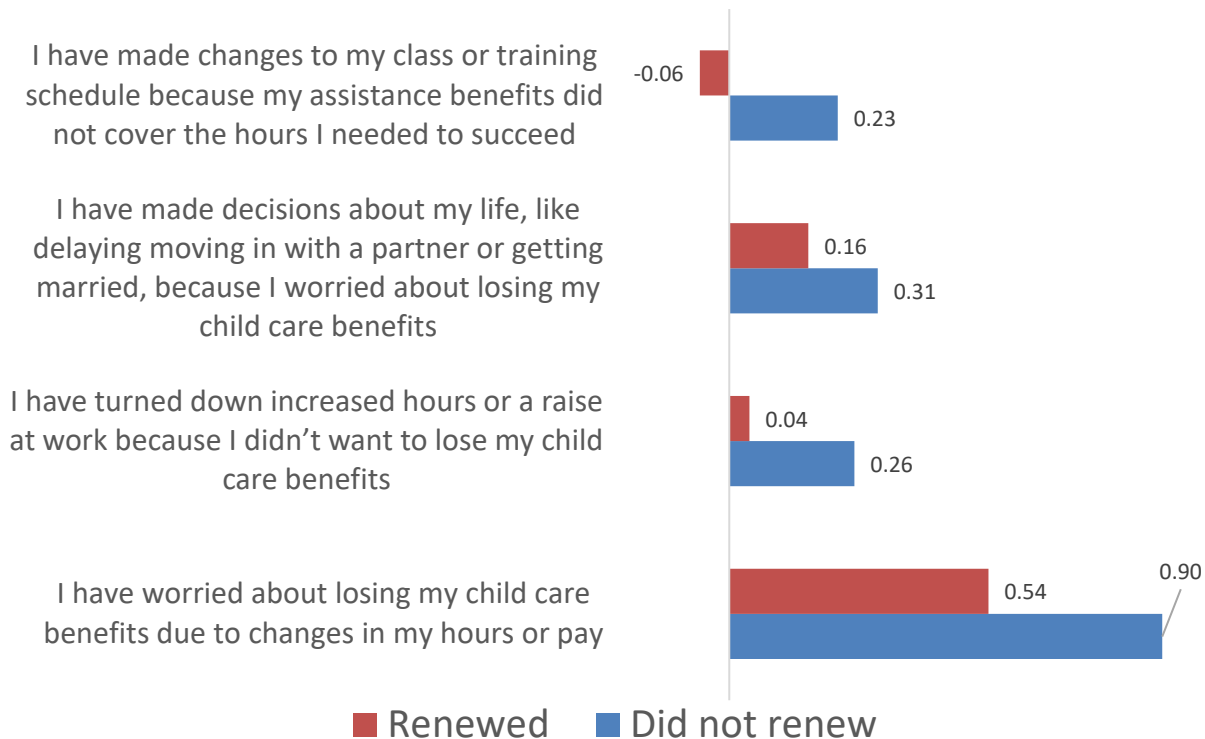
Variable	On-time renewal	Tried but unsuccessful	Did not try
Number of adults in the home	0.83*	1.28*	1.03
Total children	0.97	1.1	0.99
Employment and education status			
Work full-time	0.53	2.62	0.57
Work part-time	0.34	2.53	1.91
Student	1.5	0.95	0.45*
Not working or in school	0.11**	4.96	2.02
Currently looking for work or planning on going back to school	0.69	1.53	1.66*

# Predictors of Renewal Outcomes

Variable		On-time renewal	Tried but unsuccessful	Did not try
Education level	Less than high school	1.17	0.52	1.87
	High school or GED	1.69*	0.61	0.97
	Some college	(base)	(base)	(base)
	Associates	1.22	0.91	0.72
	Bachelors	0.79	1.19	0.94
	Graduate	0.91	0.48	2.15
	Annual household income	Less than \$15,000	(base)	(base)
	\$15,000 - \$25,000	1.26	1.34	0.77
	\$25,000 - \$35,000	1.38	0.78	1.18
	\$35,000 - \$45,000	1.53	1.45	0.89
	\$45,000 - \$55,000	0.95	2.44	1.55
	\$55,000 - \$65,000	0.67	4.87*	0.94
	More than \$65,000	0.92	4.83*	0.78



# Life Changes and Adjustments



# Recertifying During COVID: Challenges

- Delays and Turnover

*“The caseworker never gets back to you. I had to keep calling and calling... Just recently in December ... the daycare told me I have to bring in \$900 'cause the contract did not go through, and they hadn't heard from [the state], and I could not bring my kids. I actually missed a few days of work due to that.”*

# Recertifying During COVID: Helpful Supports

- Electronic communication
- Language supports

*“She spoke Spanish. What I like about this place is that they'll assign a caseworker that speaks your language.”*

# Implications

- Recertification easiest for low-wage, full-time workers
- Communication and awareness
- Multiple recertification modes
- Rebuild eligibility systems strained by COVID

# Thank you!

This project is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award (Grant #: 90YE0223) totaling \$1,560,794 with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

Hailey Heinz

[Hailey57@unm.edu](mailto:Hailey57@unm.edu)

University of New Mexico Cradle to Career Policy Institute