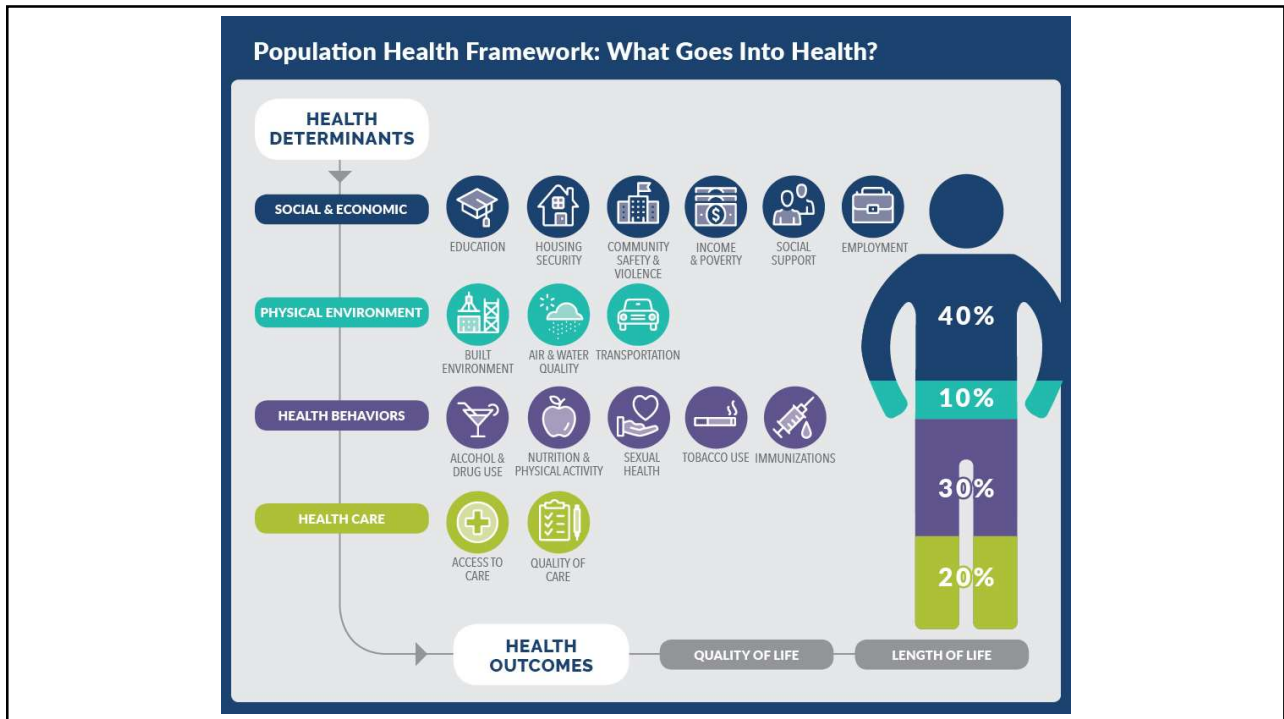







**COVID-19  
community  
health impact  
assessment**



Alameda County  
**HEALTH**  
Department

The graphic features a vertical column of five circular icons on the left: a bus, two hands holding a person, a house, a house with a heart, and a hand holding a sun. The background is light blue with a faint silhouette of a family.




-  kindergarten readiness
-  child care
-  housing security
-  homelessness
-  behavioral health



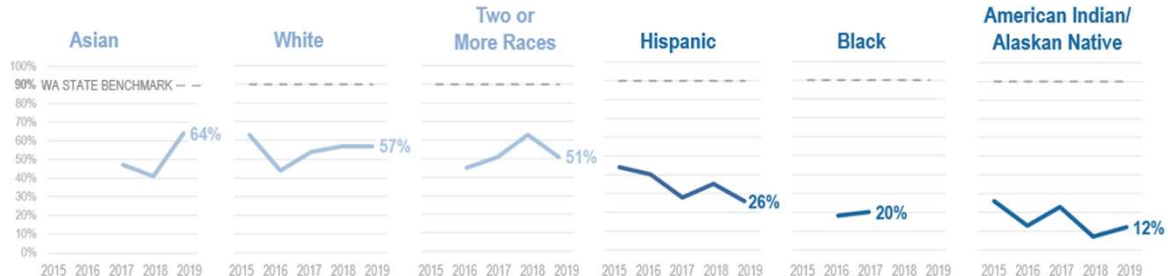
### Access to early care and education programs

- Over 80% of child care programs closed at least temporarily
- 1 in 4 sites remain closed
- Say they are at risk of closing:
  - 67% of child care centers
  - 47% of family child care providers



### Disparities in kindergarten readiness scores

Kindergarten readiness scores for **Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Black students** are consistently lower than other students in Whatcom County.

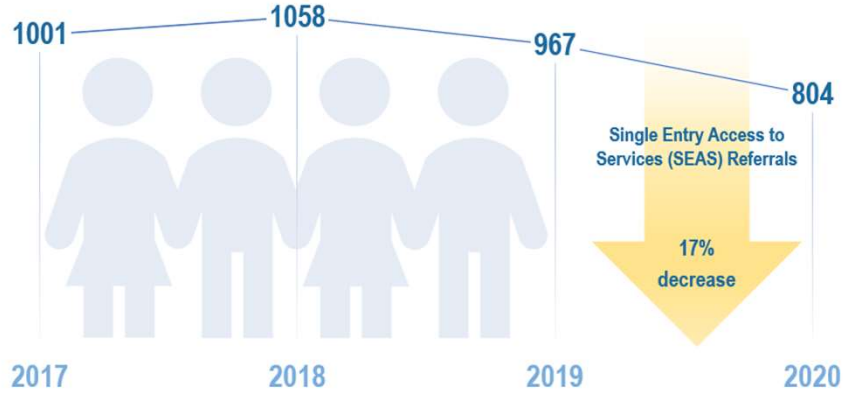


Race/Ethnicity	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Final Score
Asian	~45%	~42%	~48%	~60%	~64%	64%
White	~55%	~45%	~52%	~55%	~57%	57%
Two or More Races	~45%	~48%	~52%	~60%	~51%	51%
Hispanic	~45%	~40%	~35%	~38%	~26%	26%
Black	~20%	~20%	~20%	~20%	~20%	20%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	~25%	~15%	~25%	~15%	~12%	12%



### Screenings, intervention, & well-child visits were disrupted

During the pandemic, **the number of referrals** for Whatcom County children with suspected special health care needs decreased by 17%.



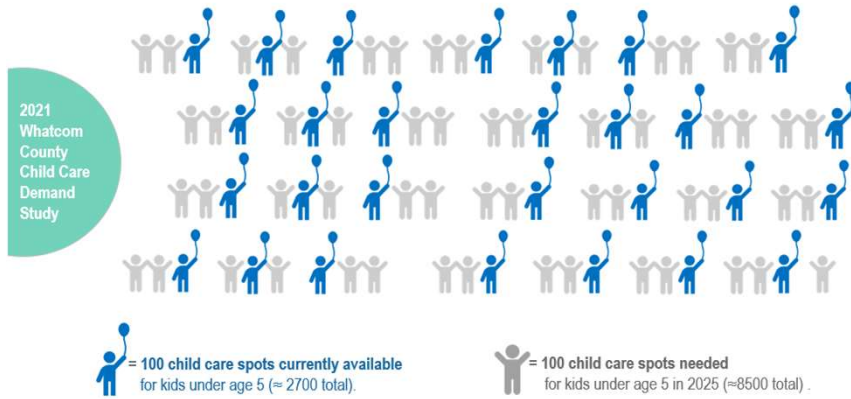
child care





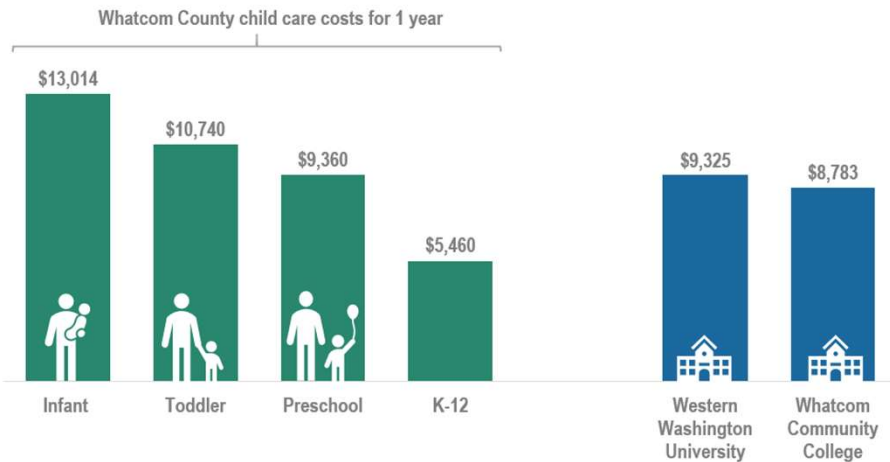
## Closures of child care facilities are worsening previously-existing shortages of child care slots

The amount of **currently available child care for kids under age 5** will need to triple by the year 2025 in order to meet Whatcom County's anticipated child care needs.



## Reduced options and high costs of child care threaten family budget stability

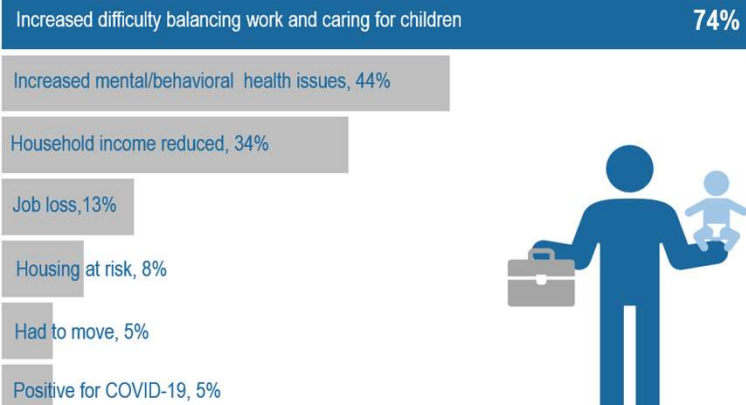
**One year of child care** for kids under five costs more than **one year of college tuition**.





## Child care facility closures had a direct impact on families' incomes, housing, mental health, and more

The 2021 WWU Child Care Demand Study found that the increased difficulty in balancing work and child care was the biggest COVID-19 impact for survey takers.



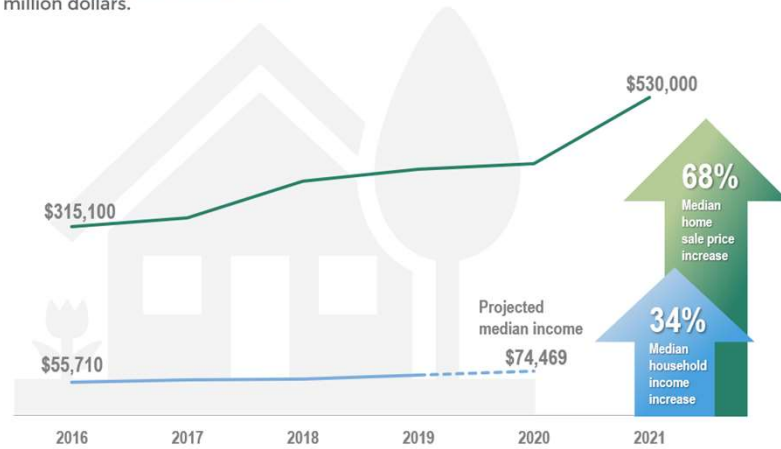
housing security





## Lack of affordable housing for rent or purchase is persistent and worsening

In the past 5 years, **median home sale prices in Whatcom County** increased by twice as much as the **median household income**. In June 2021, median home sale prices are above half a million dollars.



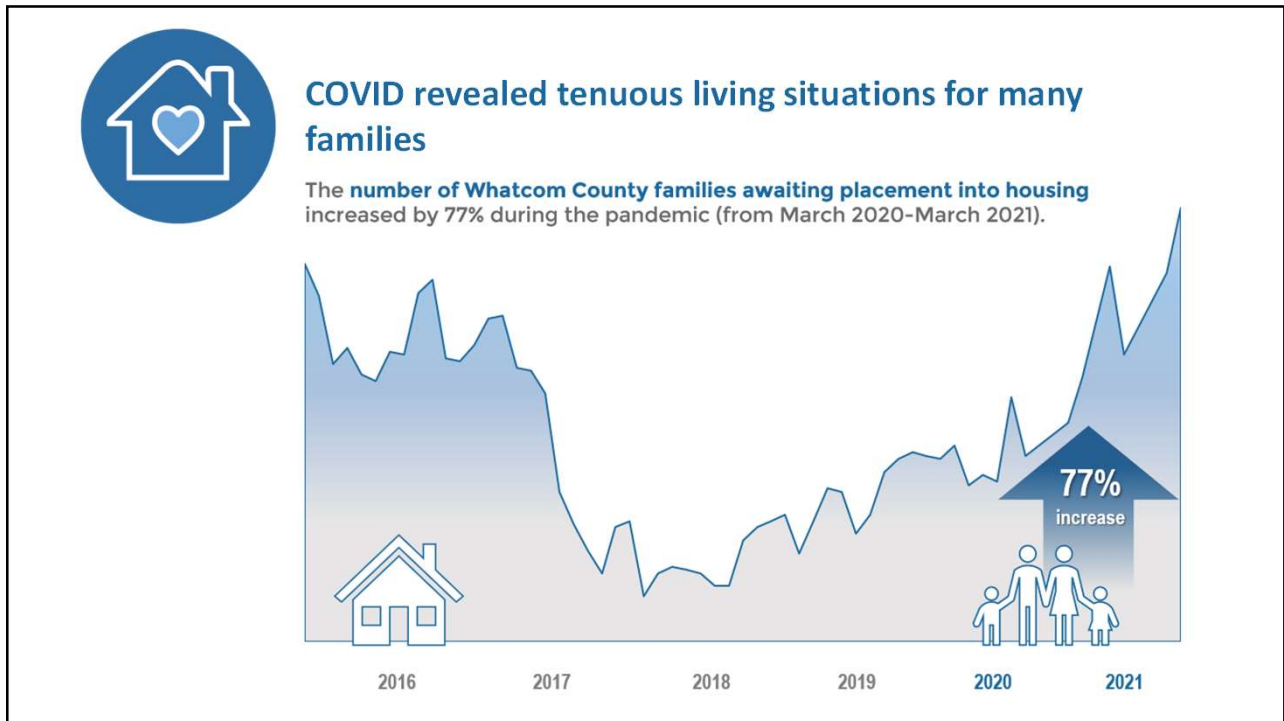
## Eviction prevention programs are due to end

In June 2021,  
**14%** of WA State residents  
 reported being behind on rent.


=

For Whatcom County residents,  
 this equals **4655 households**  
 at risk for eviction.









**Pre-existing workforces shortages and COVID protocols hampered services**

- Emergency shelter moves to allow distancing
- Program transportation options cease
- Drop-in services cut
- Funding restrictions limit use for wages



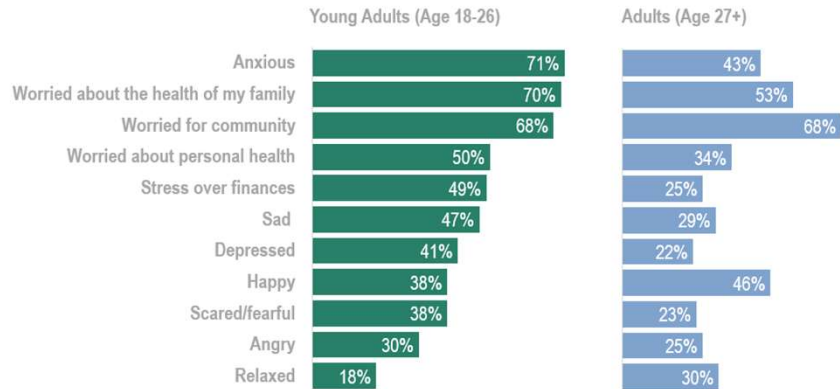
**behavioral health**





## More – and more severe – behavioral health issues

A survey taken during the pandemic found that **young adults in Whatcom County** reported feeling anxiety and depression more frequently than their **adult counterparts**.

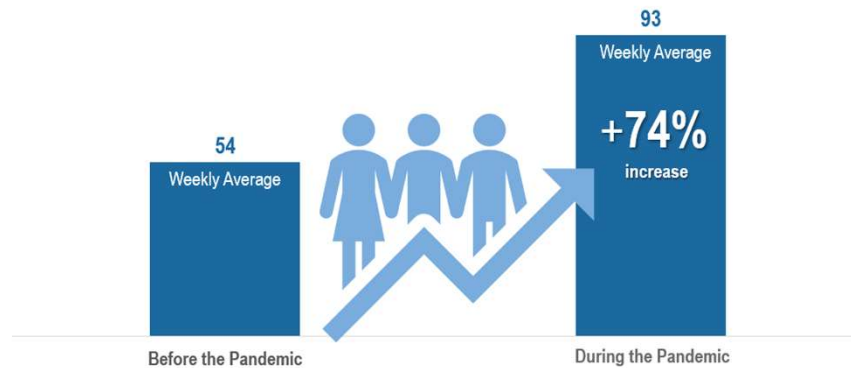


Percentage of 4,273 respondents who reported "often" or "always" during the preceding month.




## Uncertainty and trauma of the pandemic increased demand for behavioral health services

The **weekly average of mental health crisis services** provided by North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services increased by 74% during the pandemic.





## cross-cutting challenges



*“...The story lines in our data are rooted in longstanding challenges that American families with young children faced prior to the pandemic. **The pandemic did not cause these issues to arise, but rather has pressurized and thrown them into relief in a way that commands the attention of the general public and its policy makers.**”*

*A Year in the Life of a Pandemic, UOregon CTN RAPID-EC Project*



**“This is a lesson in how to care for our community.”**

**“We’re talking about healing the past and protecting the future.”**

Gratitude Parade for Lummi Nation Video, Lhaq'temish Foundation and Children of the Setting Sun



## Acknowledgements

**Many thanks to representatives from the following organizations for taking the time to be interviewed for this assessment.**

Arc of Whatcom County  
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 Bellingham Academy of Arts for Youth  
 Bellingham Schools – Multiple district leaders and support service providers  
 Blaine Schools Family Resource Coordinator  
 Catholic Community Services  
 Child & Family Well-being Task Force  
 Chuckanut Health Foundation  
 City of Bellingham Housing  
 Ferndale Schools Family Resource Coordinator  
 Food Security Task Force  
 Generations Forward Family Council and Policy, Advocacy, & Funding Team  
 Healthy Whatcom  
 Lighthouse Mission  
 Lummi Public Health  
 Lynden Schools Family Resource Coordinator  
 Max Higbee Center  
 Meridian Schools Family Resource Coordinator  
 Mount Baker Schools Family Resource Coordinator  
 Nooksack Medical Clinic  
 Nooksack Valley Schools Family Resource Coordinator  
 North Sound Accountable Community of Health  
 North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization

Northwest Washington Indian Health Board  
 Northwest Youth Services  
 Opportunity Council (OC) (multiple divisions)  
 PeaceHealth  
 Perinatal Mental Health Task Force and providers  
 Port of Bellingham’s Regional Economic Partnership  
 Public Health Advisory Board  
 Racial Equity Commission  
 Sea Mar - Behavioral health care  
 The Whatcom Dream  
 Unity Care Northwest  
 WA State Dept. of Children, Youth, and Families  
 Whatcom Asset Building Coalition (OC)  
 Whatcom Child Care Coalition  
 Whatcom County Health Department (WCHD) (multiple divisions)  
 Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee  
 Whatcom Early Learning Alliance  
 Whatcom Infants and Children’s Council  
 Whatcom Prevention Coalition (WCHD)  
 Whatcom Taking Action  
 Whatcom Youth Behavioral Health Stakeholders Gathering  
 WWU Professors