

UNIVERSITY of  
**HOUSTON**  
STAFF COUNCIL

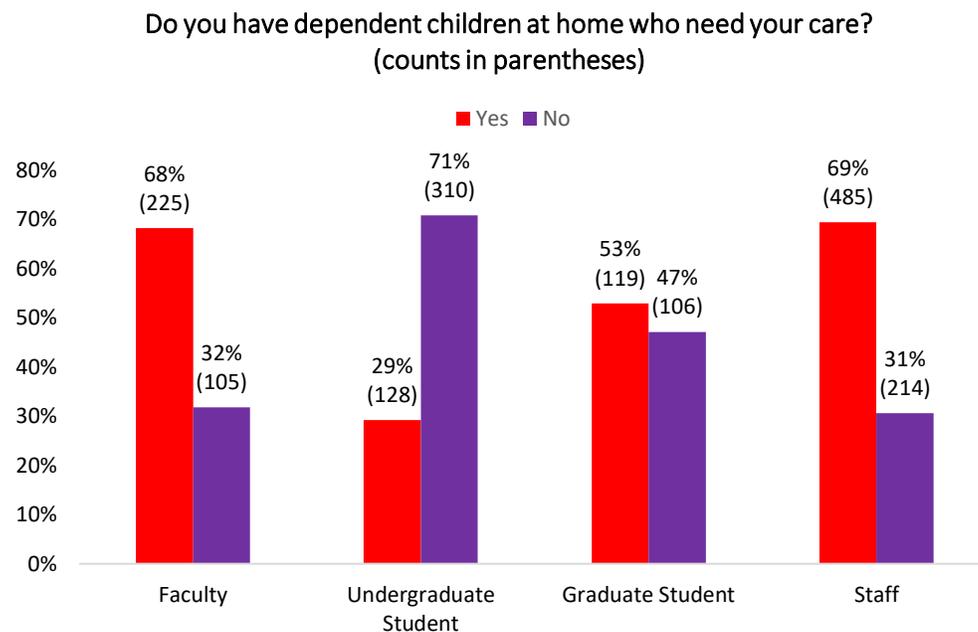
# CHILD CARE NEEDS SURVEY REPORT

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## Purpose

The Child Care Needs Survey (CNS) sponsored by the Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, and Staff Council is the result of a dialogue among faculty, students, and staff worried about the impact of COVID-19 on child care and on our community. The CNS aimed at gathering UH's community child care needs during these challenging times and using its results to find workable and realistic solutions to our community's child care needs by working with the administration.

Overall, 1,759 faculty (20%), undergraduate students (26%), graduate students (13%), and staff (41%) took part in the survey with a 94% completion rate. With the following distribution.



## Key Findings

- The results of this report reflect the current situation being experienced by faculty, students, and staff. Once the situation changes (i.e., ISDs return to face-to-face instruction), these views might change accordingly.
- Faculty and staff need child care and instructional/schooling assistance primarily, while undergraduate and graduate students need mainly child care
- Faculty need relief from child care duties while working from home, whereas staff need child care during the typical 9 am -5 pm workday
- Faculty, students, and staff with dependent children need assistance to help their children with online schooling during the regular school day
- While most child care providers and/or schools are open virtually or for in-person care or instruction, more than two-thirds of those who took part in the survey do not feel comfortable taking children to in-person care. In contrast, one-third report they would not feel comfortable sending their children to in-person school or they prefer remote teaching.

- Although the pandemic has negatively affected productivity across faculty, students, and staff, the loss in productivity has not been significantly pronounced. Less than half of those who took part in the survey felt somewhat or much less productive.
- Even though for most faculty, students, and staff, balancing child care and work/school responsibilities has been challenging, still there have been modest gains in productivity: female faculty saw productivity increases more significant than those perceived by male faculty.
- Around two-thirds of survey respondents are either not familiar or not familiar at all with several UH programs that could diminish the negative impacts of child care duties on faculty, students, and staff's work and school responsibilities.

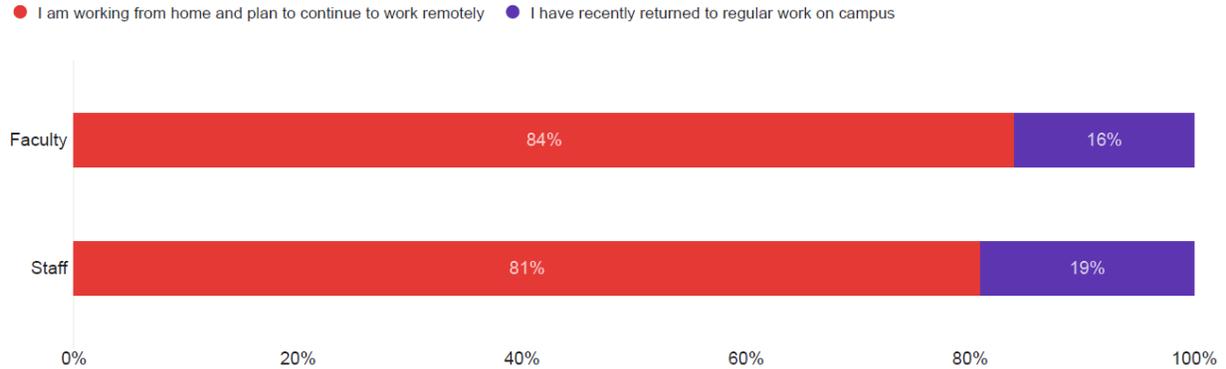
## Recommendations

1. Promote the Virtual Education Support Program (VESP) and UH's guidelines for providing flexibility
  - a. The VESP will provide faculty, staff, and students a high-quality and affordable back-up service for virtual tutoring
  - b. Promoting UH's guidelines for providing flexibility would encourage faculty, students, and staff with particular situations to seek solutions and accommodations in collaboration with their direct supervisor or instructors.
2. Promote Bright Horizons back-up child care and study the possibility of pooling unused benefit days for benefit-eligible employees in critical need of child care.
  - a. Given that more than half of those who participated in the survey are not very familiar or not familiar at all with Bright Horizons' back-up care, promoting it may provide significant relief.
  - b. Given that Bright Horizons' benefit has a limit of 10 days of emergency care per employee per year at subsidized rates for work-related reasons, some faculty, students, and staff may have already used their allotted days. Still, some eligible faculty, students, and staff may not need to use all their days and would like to donate some of those unused days to a "pool" for those in need.
3. Promote UH's Family Medical Leave policy
  - a. The FML is for any employee of UH who is unable to work or telework due to a need for leave to care for a child under 18 years of age (or 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care due to mental or physical disability) of such employee if the school (elementary or secondary) or place of care has been closed, or the child care provider of such son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19.

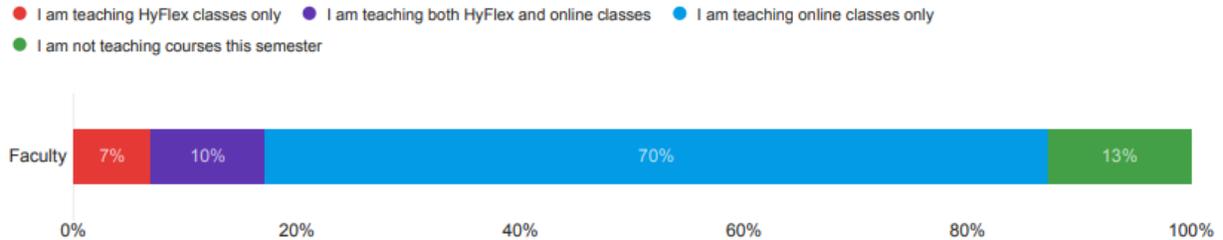
## Background

A vast majority of faculty and staff are working from home and plan to continue to work remotely. Around 70% of the faculty teach online classes only (Figure 1), while 17% are teaching a combination of HyFlex only and or HyFlex and online courses (Figure 2).

**Figure 1. Current work situation**

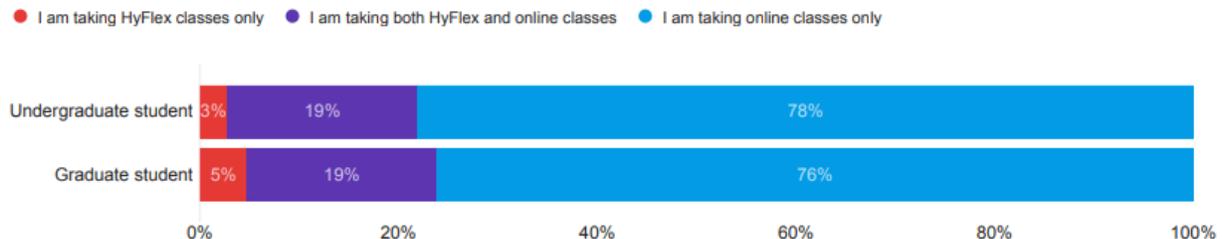


**Figure 2. Teaching situation**



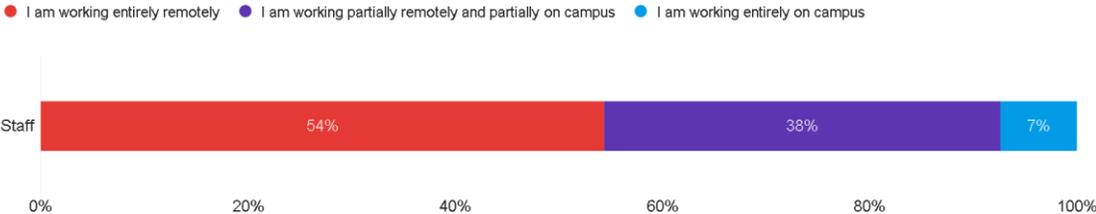
More than three-quarters of students are only taking classes online only. In contrast, 19% are taking both HyFlex and online classes, and only 3% of undergraduate and 5% of graduate students are taking HyFlex classes only (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. What best describes your semester?**



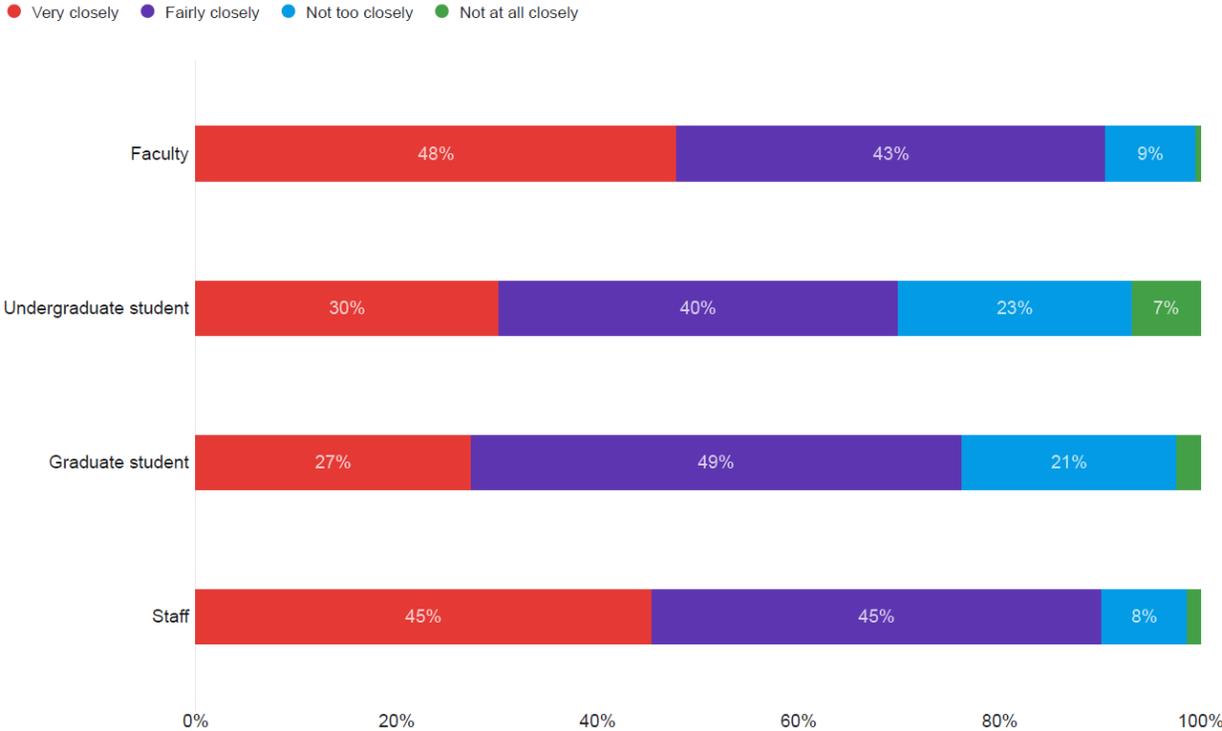
More than half of the staff is working remotely (54%), while 38% is working partially remotely and partially on campus (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Current work arrangements**



In terms of how closely survey respondents have been following the news about how the COVID-19 situation is being managed by UH, approximately 90% of faculty and staff have been following fairly or very closely, followed by graduate (76%) and undergraduate students (70%).

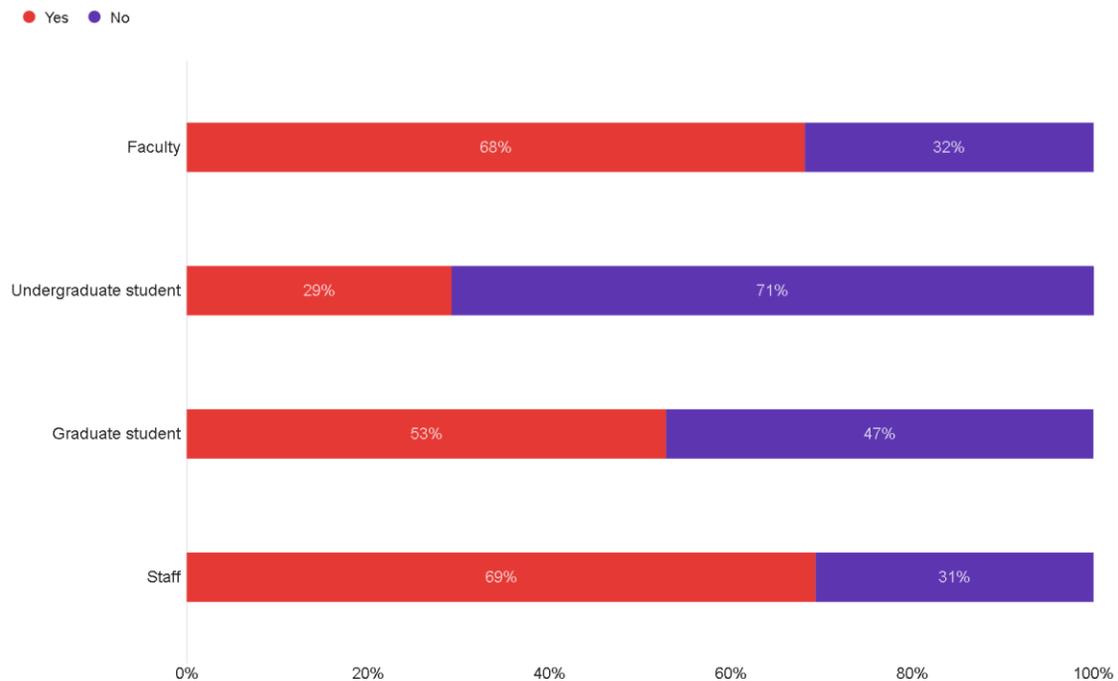
**Figure 5. How close do you follow the news about how the COVID-19 situation is being managed by UH**



## Issues and Current Mood

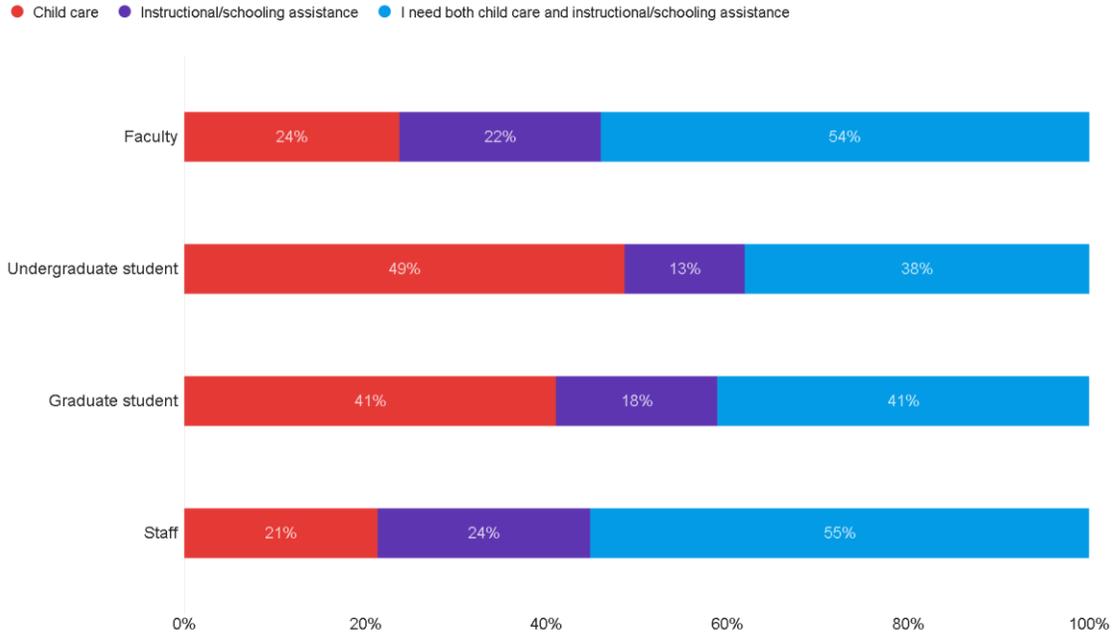
A majority of those who participated in the survey have dependent children at home who need some care (57%). When subset by type of affiliation, 69% of staff have children at home, followed by faculty (68%), graduate students (53%), and undergraduate students (29%). On average, faculty, staff, and students have two children that require some level of care or schooling ( $\mu = 1.7$ ), and there is one adult per household who can provide care and education without altering their work or other schedules ( $\mu = 0.74$ )

**Figure 6. Do you have dependent children at home who need care?**



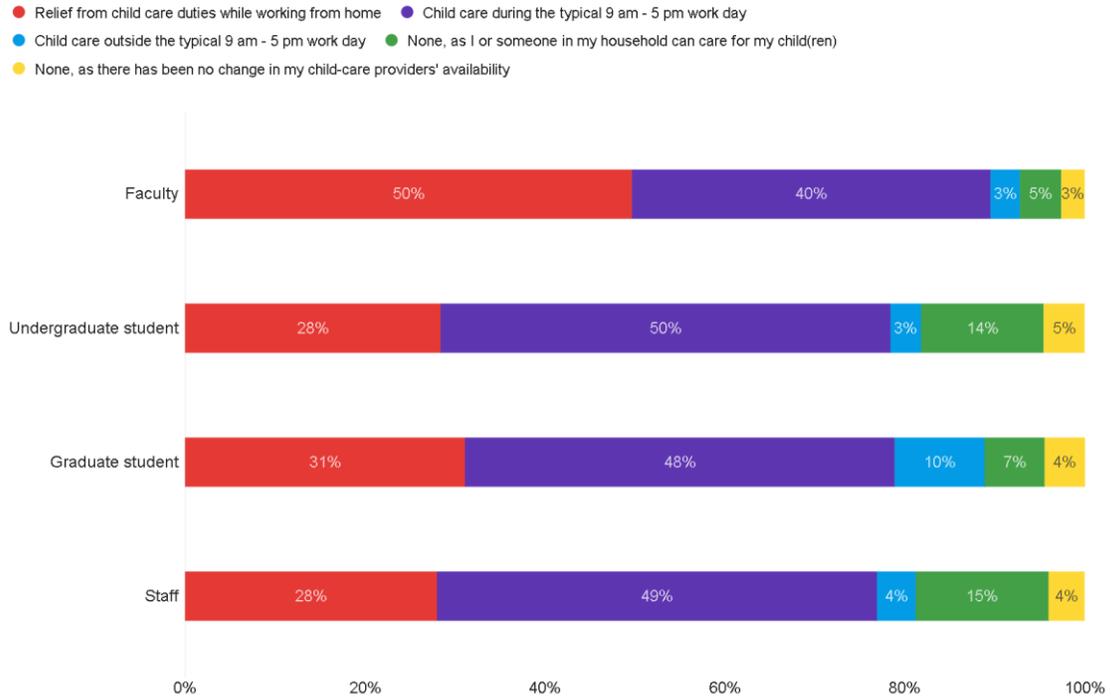
Regarding the type of care needed primarily, faculty and staff need both child care and instructional/schooling assistance (54% and 55%, respectively). In comparison, 49% and 41% of undergraduate and graduate students primarily need child care.

**Figure 7. What type of child care do you need primarily for your child(ren)?**



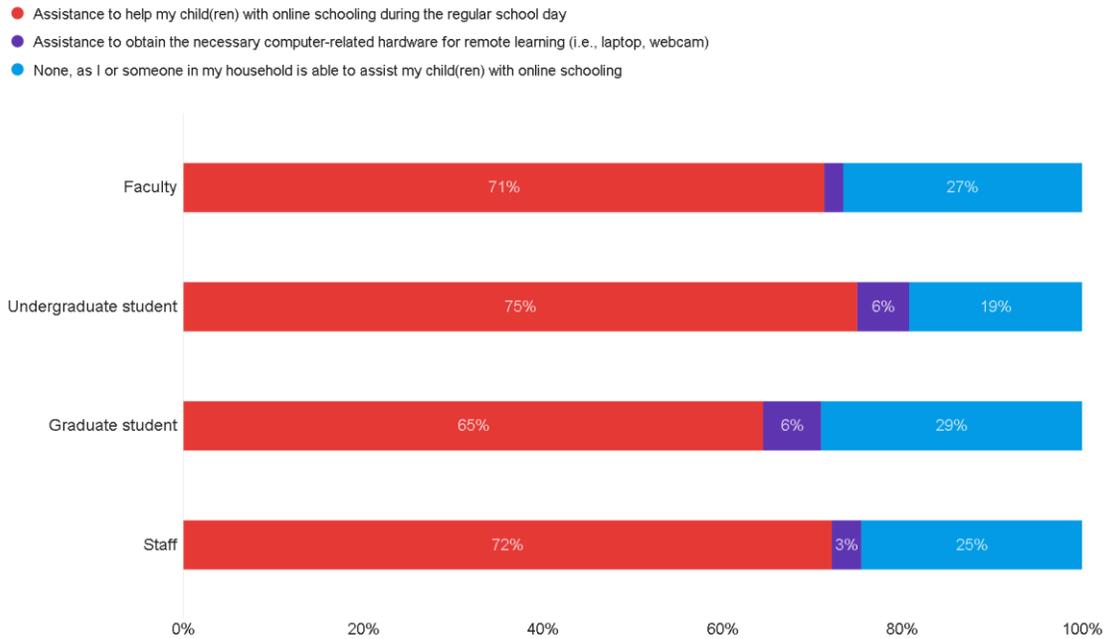
Respondents' most important need for child care varied among faculty, staff, and students. For faculty, the most critical issue was getting relief from child care duties while working from home (50%) followed by child care during the typical workday (40%). For staff and students, the most crucial issue was getting child care during the usual 9 am- 5 pm workday.

**Figure 8. The most important need for child care**



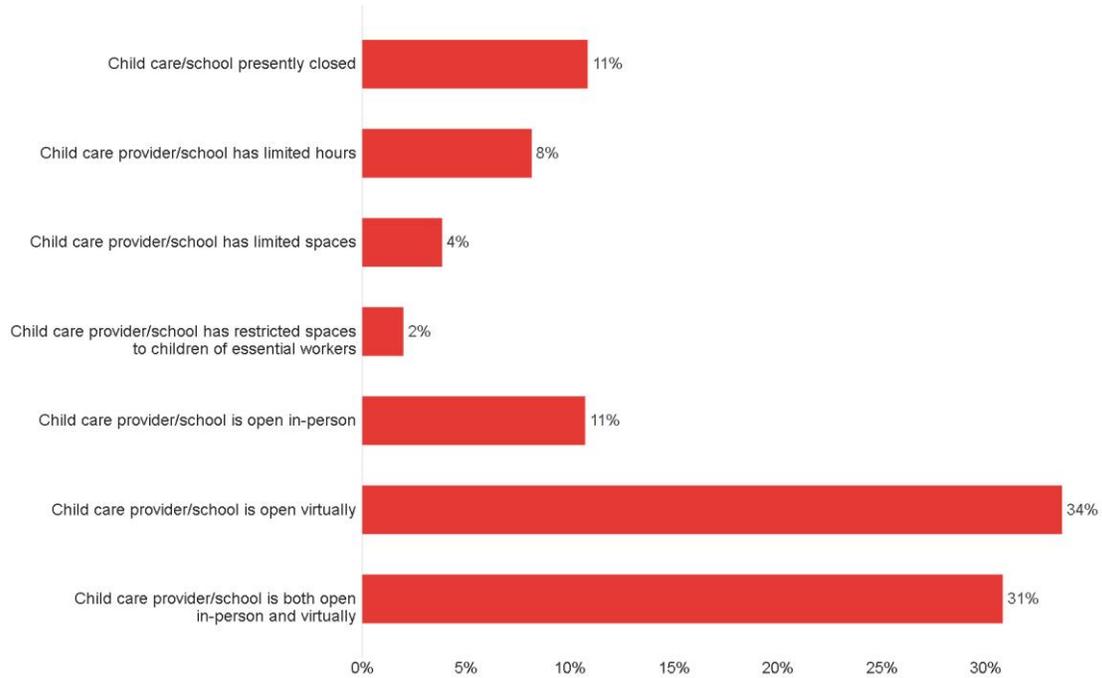
For respondents that indicated that the most critical need for their households was instructional/schooling assistance, a majority of faculty (71%), staff (72%), graduate (65%), and undergraduate students (75%) said that they needed assistance to help their children with online schooling during the regular school day.

**Figure 9. The most important need for instructional/schooling assistance**



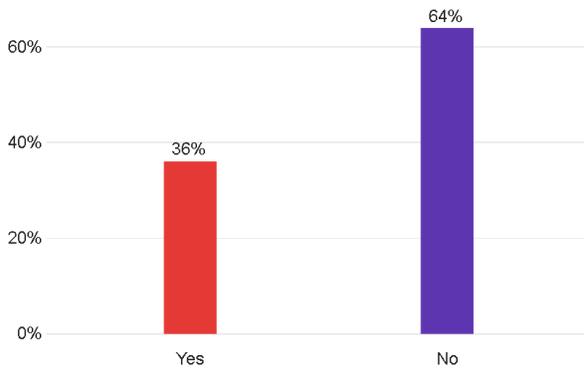
When asked about the current status of survey participants' child care/school where their child(ren) usually attended, 65% indicated that they are virtually open (34%) or are both available for virtual and/or for in-person care/instruction (31%) (see Figure 10). In contrast, more than two-thirds of parents, caretakers, or guardians do not feel comfortable taking their children to a child care center or school (64% and 36%, respectively), or they would prefer remote teaching (36%) (see Figure 11).

**Figure 10. What is the current status of your child(ren)'s childcare/school?**

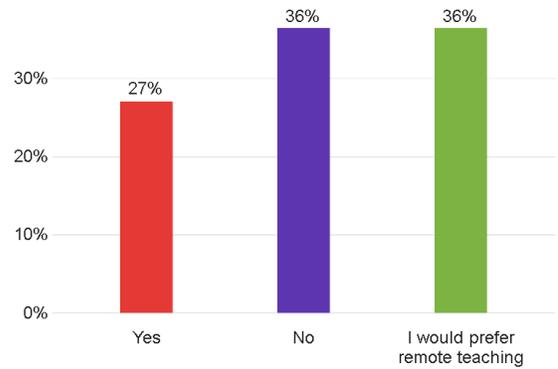


**Figure 11. Comfort Level**

If your child care center was open for face-to-face services would you feel comfortable taking your child(ren) there?

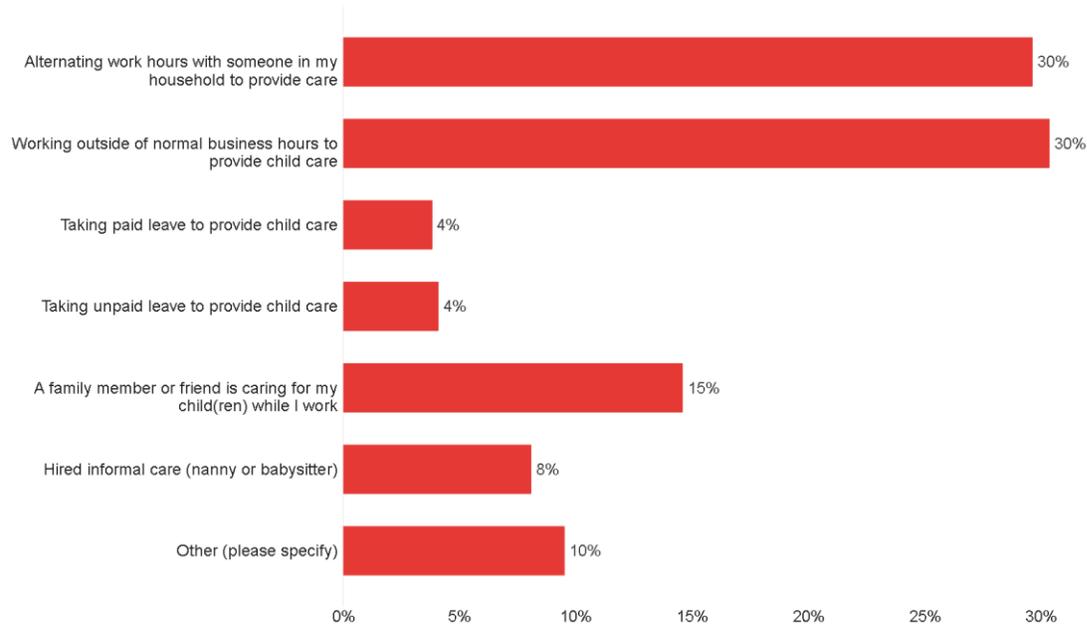


If your school was open for face-to-face teaching would you feel comfortable taking your child(ren) there?



In terms of providing child care in cases where a school or a child care provider is still close, 60% of respondents either alternate work hours with someone in their household to provide care (30%) or work outside during regular business hours (30%).

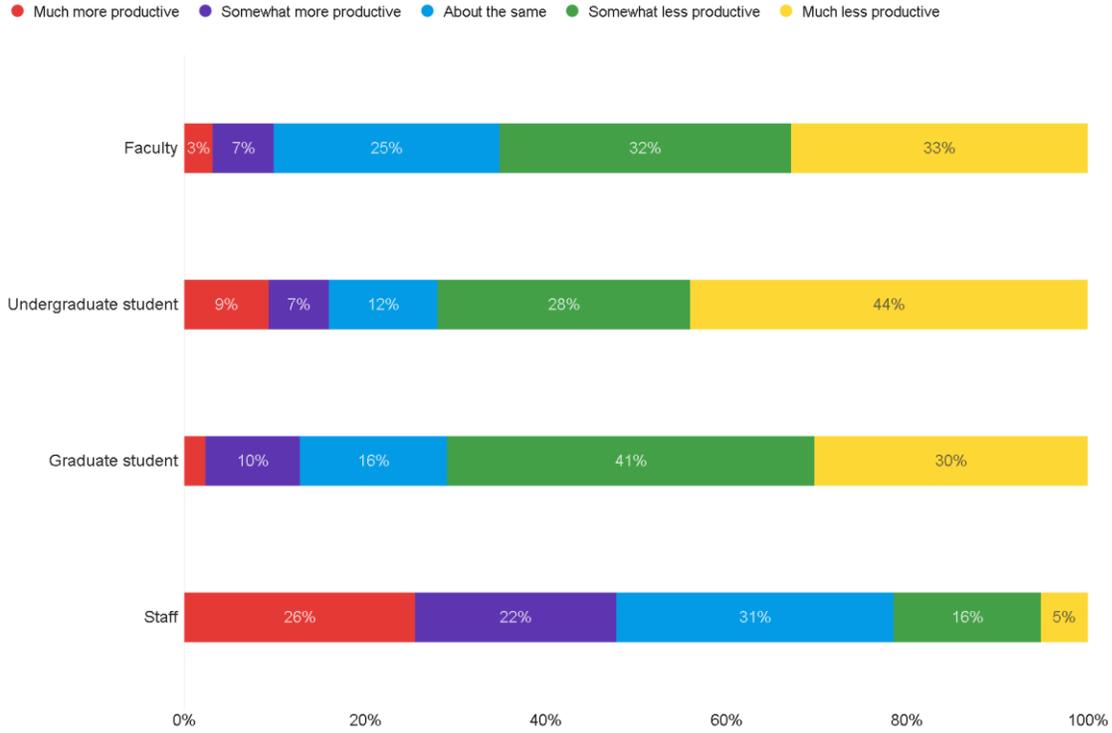
**Figure 12. Child care arrangements**



In terms of how the pandemic has impacted productivity, faculty seem to be more affected by the pandemic followed by undergraduate and graduate students. In contrast, staff report the highest levels of productivity among groups. Nonetheless, 10% of the faculty reported being somewhat or much more productive since the start of the pandemic (Figure 13).

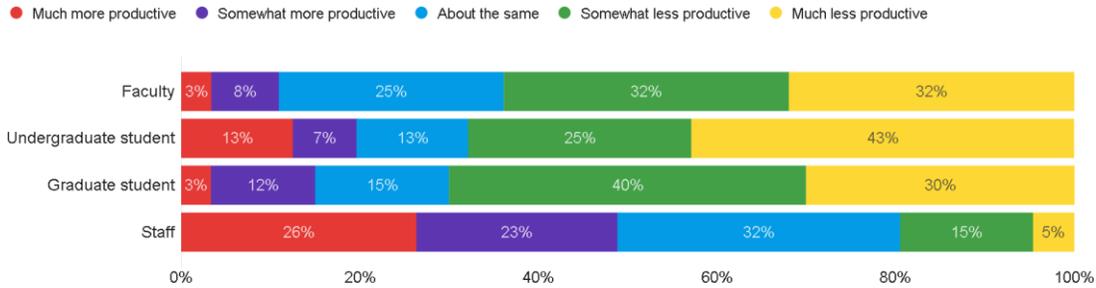
There are differences, although not statistically significant, when productivity is compared across sex/gender and primary affiliation with UH. For instance, 11% of female faculty feel somewhat or more productive since the start of the pandemic compared to only 5% of male faculty (Figure 14).

**Figure 13. Has your productivity increased/decreased since the start of the pandemic?**

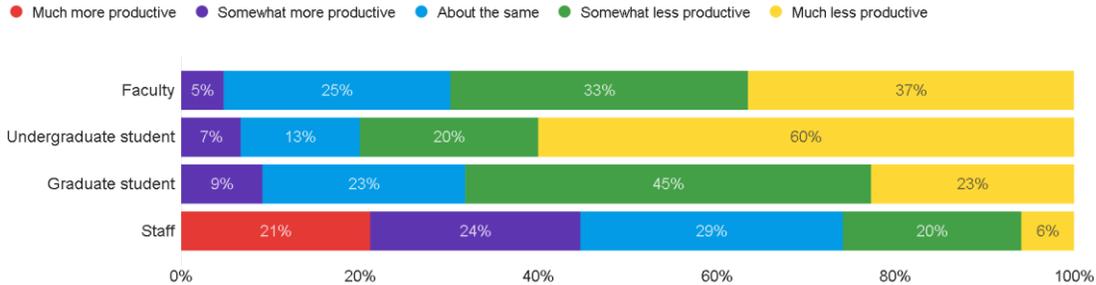


**Figure 14. Has your productivity increased/decreased since the start of the pandemic?**

**Female**

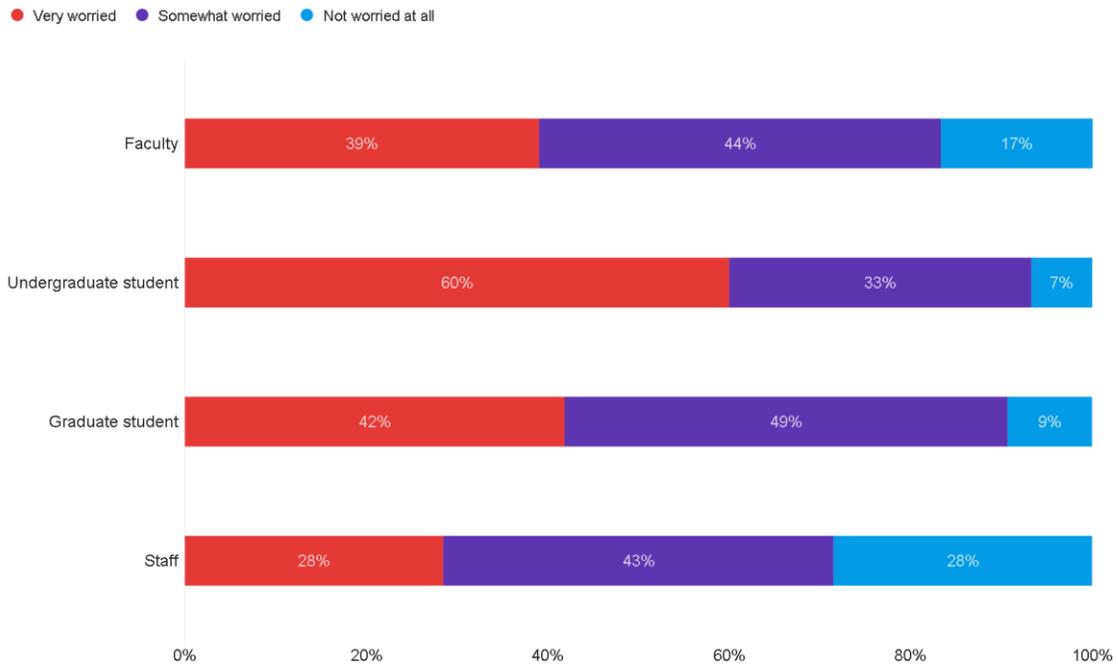


**Male**



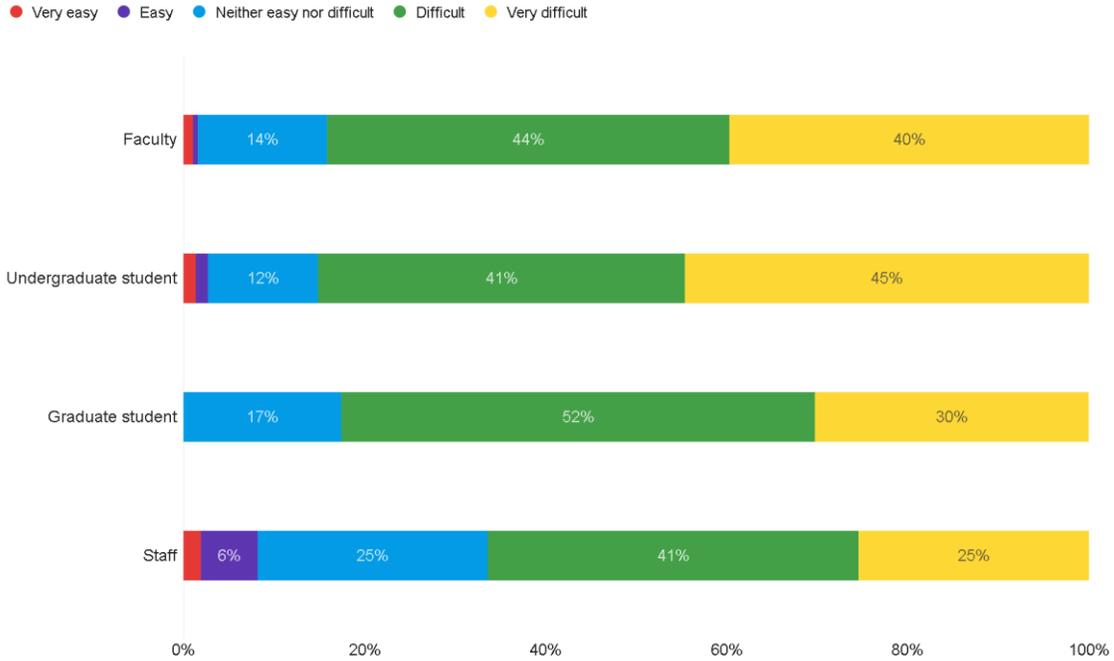
The observed differences in productivity may reflect faculty, staff, and students' worries that child care issues due to the pandemic may impact their career development or degree progress (Figure 15).

**Figure 15. How worried are you that child care issues due to the pandemic are impacting your career development or your degree progress?**



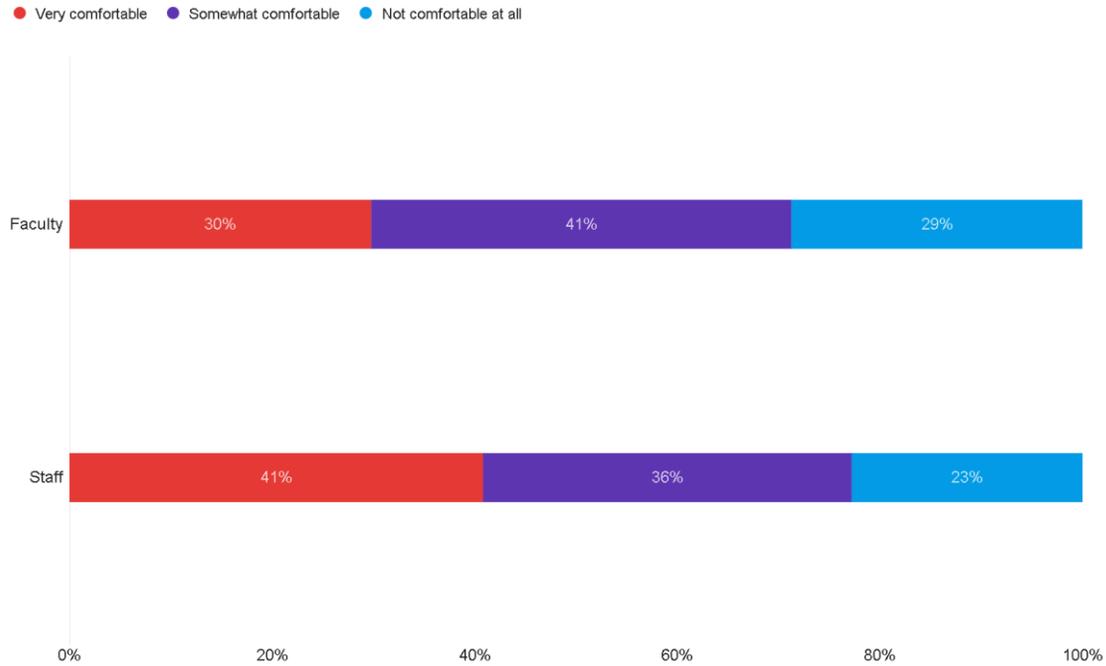
For most faculty, students, and staff, balancing child care and work/school responsibilities has been challenging. Around 86% of undergraduate students have found balancing child care and work/school responsibilities difficult during the pandemic, followed by faculty (84%), graduate students (72%), and staff (66%) (Figure 16).

**Figure 16. How difficult have you found balancing child care and work/school responsibilities during the pandemic?**

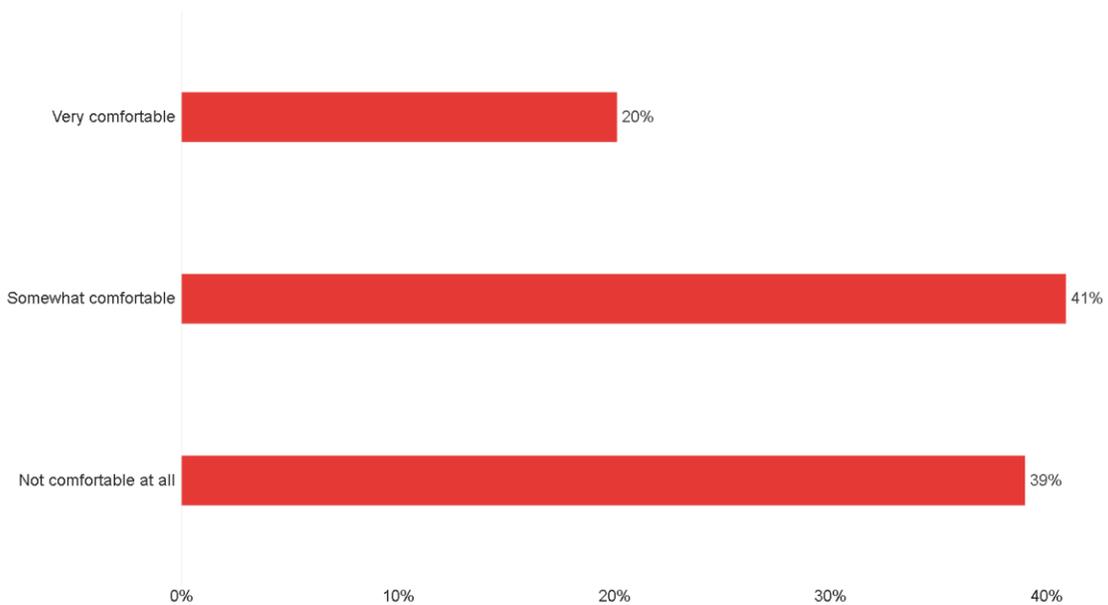


Faculty and staff feel comfortable (i.e., very and somewhat) talking to their direct supervisor about work responsibilities due to childcare-related issues associated with the pandemic (Figure 17). Students, on the other hand, are less likely to feel comfortable talking about school responsibilities due to childcare-related issues with an academic advisor or with a professor (Figure 18).

**Figure 17. If you were having difficulties keeping with your work responsibilities due to child care related issues associated with the pandemic, how comfortable would you feel talking about them with your supervisor?**



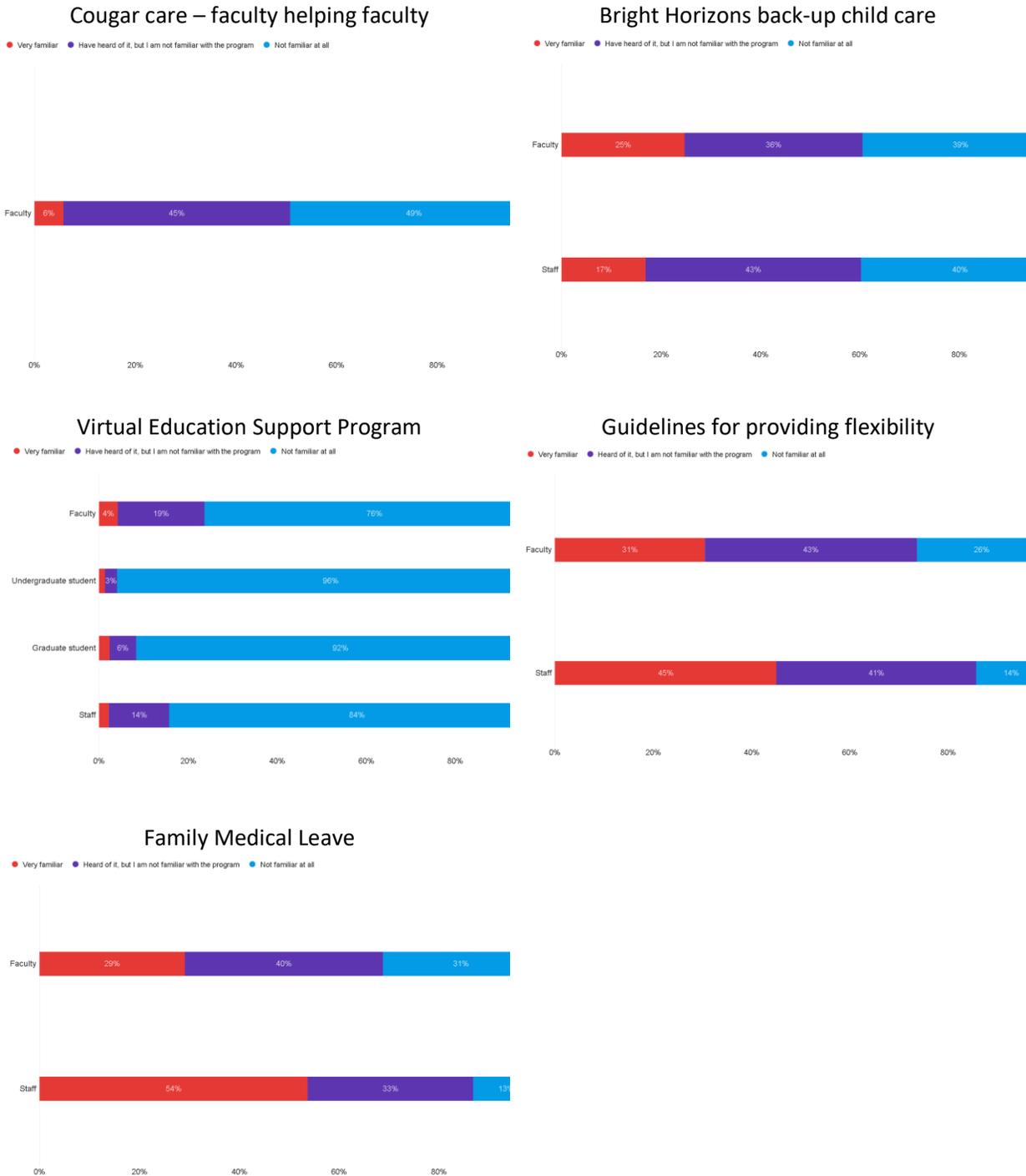
**Figure 18. If you were having difficulties keeping with your school responsibilities due to childcare-related issues associated with the pandemic, how comfortable would you feel talking about them with your academic advisor/professor?**



## Policy Knowledge

Around two-thirds of survey respondents are either not familiar or not familiar at all with several UH’s programs that could diminish the negative impacts of child care on faculty, students, and staff work and school responsibilities (Figure 19).

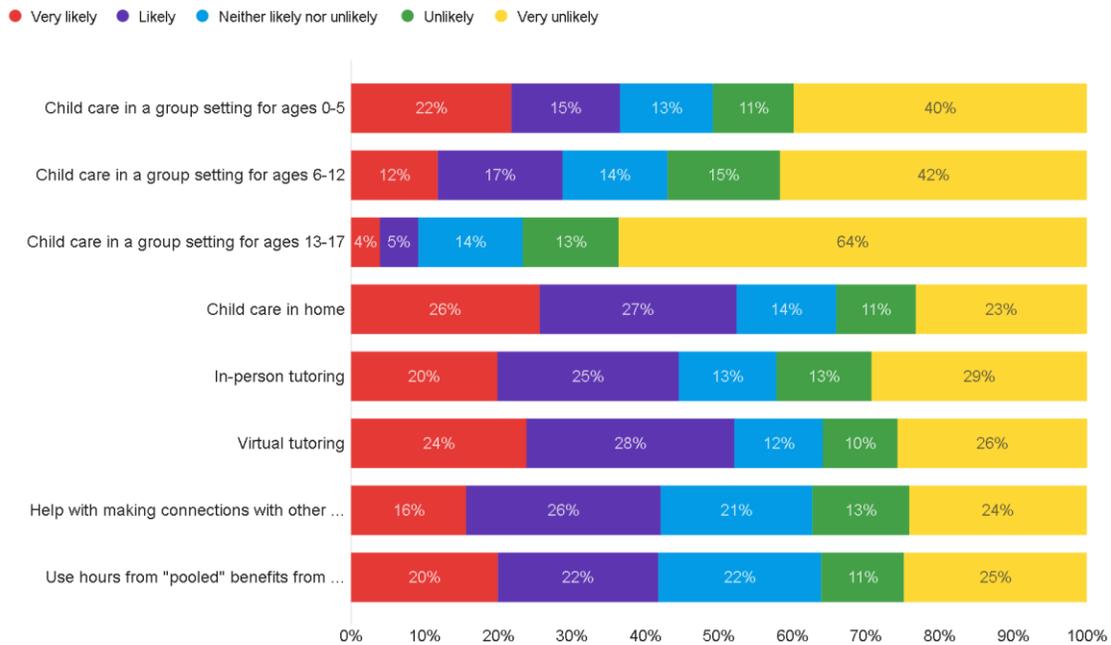
**Figure 19. Current policy knowledge**



## Recommendations

A majority of faculty, students, and staff seems unlikely to participate in any in-person child care group setting (see Figure 11). Among the potential temporary back-up services, child care at home, virtual tutoring, and help with making connections with other families to create a “school pod” seem to be the ones most likely to be utilized to provide temporary back-up services (Figure 20).

**Figure 20. Likelihood of using potential temporary back up services**



Based upon the information and analysis in this report, we offer the following recommendations to make the current situation regarding child care less negatively impactful on the UH community:

4. Promote the Virtual Education Support Program (VESP) and UH’s guidelines for providing flexibility
  - a. The VESP will provide faculty, staff, and students a high-quality and affordable back-up service for virtual tutoring
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