

2017 Report: Parents and the high cost of child care ^[1]

Author: Child Care Aware of America

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Executive Summary

During the 2016 Presidential campaign and election, voters and candidates made it clear that the high costs of child care constitute a tremendous burden on working families. In a poll by The First Five Years Fund, regardless of political party affiliation, researchers found 80 percent of voters said making sure children start life with early childhood education is a top priority. President Trump promised that families would be provided with some relief from these costs. As we continue to follow the evolution of his child care plan, we are avidly following and promoting efforts made by Congress to provide relief for working families. Even as we work for motion at the federal level, we are enthused by the innovative and impactful solutions happening in states and communities around the country. Quality child care should not be a privilege for the few – all families deserve to have access to high-quality, affordable child care.

This edition of *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2017* is a slimmer, more cost-focused report than in previous years. As we continue to dive into child care costs around the country and to explore the true cost of child care, we know that one report is no longer sufficient. Throughout 2017, we will dive deeper into the effects of child care costs on families of infants and toddlers, families of children with special needs, single parents, and child care providers. In this report, we focus in on the importance of child care as a workforce support; high-quality child care yields a multi-fold return on investment in long-term outcomes for children, families, business, and our economy.

As in year's past, we provide the average cost of care for each state and the percent of median income married and single parents pay for child care. Costs and affordability percentages are reported for center-based and family child care; top 10 rankings are provided within the body of this report and all rankings, reported costs, and affordability percentages are provided in the Appendix document. Costs and affordability by child care type and household have been included in the interactive Cost of Child Care map on our web site. In addition, county-level data have been included in the interactive map for seven states: Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New Hampshire.

We have provided a deeper analysis of child care costs by reporting infant costs separately from toddler child care costs for center-based and family child care programs. School-age costs are now reported for the 9-months during which many children are in school, and for the summer months when children may be in child care for part or full-day care.

As our nation's leading voice for child care, Child Care Aware® of America provides a comprehensive review of average child care costs across the country. In addition, we conclude this report with a brief review of financing solutions, policy recommendations and conclusions. As in previous years, we emphasize the importance to invest in child care, decrease the cost burden on families, streamline eligibility standards and procedures related to tax incentives, provide support to parents pursuing higher education, and to prioritize professional development for the child care workforce.

Region: United States ^[3]

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