

Expensive childcare and short school days = Lower maternal employment and more time in childcare? Evidence from the American time use survey ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access PDF online ^[2]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between maternal employment and state-to-state differences in childcare cost and mean school day length. Pairing state-level measures with an individual-level sample of prime working-age mothers from the American Time Use Survey (2005–2014; n = 37,993), we assess the multilevel and time-varying effects of childcare costs and school day length on maternal full-time and part-time employment and childcare time. We find mothers' odds of full-time employment are lower and part-time employment higher in states with expensive childcare and shorter school days. Mothers spend more time caring for children in states where childcare is more expensive and as childcare costs increase. Our results suggest that expensive childcare and short school days are important barriers to maternal employment and, for childcare costs, result in greater investments in childcare time. Politicians engaged in national debates about federal childcare policies should look to existing state childcare structures for policy guidance.

Related link:

Region: United States ^[3]

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