

Here's why you should ask how much daycare is paying its employees ^[1]

Finding affordable child care can be a challenge but how well a center pays its staff should be at the top of your list of questions when interviewing daycare providers, according to one social media user.

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EXCERPTS

Child care is expensive. If you have kids you know this. Even in small towns with low costs of living, the price of daycare can be exorbitant. And if you live in a major city? We're talking \$15,000 per year minimum. And that's just for one kid. If you aren't a one-and-done family, paying for daycare may cost more than your rent.

So it seems logical that you'd want to find the best bargain, right? A daycare facility that looks good, has nice toys, and a monthly price tag that you won't need to take out a loan or sell a kidney to cover. But, according to a recent Twitter thread, there is another criterion you should consider when comparison shopping for child care: how much they pay their staff.

Seems odd, doesn't it? Why should their payroll matter to you? Daycares are frequently understaffed, the work can be stressful, and the hours long. It's a demanding job. And for center owners, there's a lot of overhead, so many prioritize the aesthetics of the place over the payroll. As Twitter user Ms. Respex explains in what she calls "scary but frank terms," parents should definitely care about how well daycare staff is paid. When child care centers put themselves "in a 'where will we find someone else willing to work these hours for this pay' position, you find yourself overlooking stuff and cutting corners about what is that serious or not."

She goes on to explain that daycares are usually too understaffed to fire anyone who doesn't "full-on strike a child." Needless to say, in a workplace where you cannot lose anyone without putting yourself in jeopardy of not even making legal supervision ratio," she adds, "Bad actors thrive."

As in all things, you get what you pay for. If daycare centers are paying peanuts, there's not going to be much competition for those jobs. When there's no competition for those jobs, the center administrators have to take what they can get. When child care facilities pay their staff well, there will be a line out the door of people clamoring for those jobs. "When you pay well," says Ms. Respex, "you get to be selective."

So when you sit down with the center administrator to ask about ratios and curriculum, time spent outdoors, and how they handle medical emergencies, do your self and your kids a favor and ask about staff pay.

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