

# Free child care and pre-k for all <sup>[1]</sup>

Other countries around the world understand the importance of child care, early education, and family leave. It is long past time for the United States to join them.

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**Source:** Bernie

**Format:** Press release

**Publication Date:** 24 Feb 2020

## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

### Excerpted from plan

Our current child care and early education system in the United States is an international embarrassment. Today in America, we have a totally dysfunctional child care and pre-kindergarten system that is failing our children, our parents, and our child care and early education workers. Not only is our child care infrastructure and access to high-quality care and early learning lacking throughout the country, child care is unaffordable in every single state in America.

For parents all over the country, taking time off or working fewer hours to care for their children is simply not an option. That leads many families to spend a disproportionate amount of their income to cover the cost of child care and early education. The Department of Health and Human Services qualifies “affordable child care” as costing no more than 7 percent of a family’s income, but families are spending between 9 and 22 percent of their income on child care on average. For low-income families, the burden is even higher: a full 35 percent of their income goes toward child care. And when it comes to the proportion of income spent on child care, single parents spend more than double what married parents spend. The high cost of care also pushes parents who may want to work part-time or stay home with their children to work more hours and spend more time away from their family.

**Related link:** Sanders unveils \$1.5 trillion universal childcare plan ahead of South Carolina debate <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** United States <sup>[4]</sup>

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