

Costly child care causing 'vicious cycle' for some parents ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

As employees are being asked to return to the office after working from home during the pandemic, the cost of child care has become a more important topic for parents.

"Families are facing a perfect storm," said Bethany Robertson, co-director of ParentsTogether Action, a national family advocacy group based in D.C.

According to Robertson, child care has become more expensive and more difficult to find as demand has increased.

"Child care is really at the heart of what makes our economy work, and unfortunately, that system is broken right now," Robertson said. "This has real ripple effects throughout the economy."

ParentsTogether Action, which has 3 million members around the country, conducted a survey of about 1,500 families and said 62% reported that a member of their household had to cut back on hours or leave a job because they couldn't find child care within their budget.

"It becomes a vicious cycle," Robertson said. "If you can't afford care you can't work, and if you can't work then you can't afford care."

According to the survey, 72% of respondents said child care has been even harder to find during the pandemic because it is either too expensive, unavailable or of poor quality.

And 42% of respondents said they had to make financial trade-offs, including having to cut back on food expenses or having to put off paying their utility bills in full, in order to pay for child care.

"They're facing a lot of challenges in finding child care that is both affordable and available," said Robertson.

The survey largely consisted of middle- and low-income parents, with 81% of respondents having household incomes of less than \$100,000 and 74% of respondents having household incomes of less than \$75,000.

Region: United States ^[3]

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