

A \$33,000-a-year child care burden vexes Harris, Trump campaigns ^[1]

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Excerpt

In the US, an average family of four will spend more annually on child care than they do on housing.

Both presidential candidates have put forward specific policy proposals to address housing affordability. But neither Kamala Harris nor Donald Trump have detailed how they would reduce costs for parents who are now in many cases spending \$33,000 a year for two kids in day care.

It's a source of frustration for American parents, who are often forced to dip into their savings or take on second jobs to make the math work. In every state in the country, the cost of child care outpaces average rent payments.

A combination of strict regulations around staffing levels and decades of underfunding led to this situation, which has only worsened since the pandemic when centers closed and many poorly paid workers left the industry altogether.

In an email, a Harris campaign spokesperson pointed to the vice president's plans for increasing the child tax credit to as much as \$3,600 for most kids, and \$6,000 for newborns. Harris' website says she plans to guarantee that "hardworking families can afford high-quality child care, all while ensuring that care workers are paid a living wage," but doesn't provide further details.

The Trump campaign's national press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in an email that Trump prioritized expanded access to child care and paid family leave during his presidency "and he will do it again in his second term, while also implementing an economic agenda that will make America affordable again for working families."

His running mate JD Vance has proposed boosting the child tax credit to \$5,000.

Though tax credits get money in the hands of parents, they are "just one part of the ecosystem," said Hailey Gibbs, an associate director of early childhood policy at the Center for American Progress, a liberal research and advocacy group.

"Having additional funds that bring down the cost of those necessities doesn't necessarily invest in the supply of the sector or in the compensation of the workforce," Gibbs said.

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