

Caring for a child shouldn't cause financial ruin ^[1]

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Excerpts

Every mother in America knows this struggle well: how do you afford to raise a child?

My daughter was born almost 14 years ago and my family is still financially recovering from the struggle of supporting a newborn.

My family is not alone. American families are spending a greater and greater portion of their income on child care. According to the nonprofit Child Care Aware, the average cost of child care in the US is now more than \$10,000 per year and even higher for infants and toddlers. And the problem is only getting worse. It's no wonder so many women are choosing not to have children because they say they can't afford them.

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The situation became a catch-22: If I didn't work, it would be impossible to balance our bills and afford the essentials to raise a child. But if I did, we wouldn't be able to afford those things anyway, because all the money would be going to daycare.

This is why so many mothers like me are driven out of the workforce. As one of the only industrialized countries in the world without national paid leave, many of us are forced to choose between continuing to work or raising our children.

For the fortunate mothers who do have access to a paid leave program, 26.3% are less likely to quit their jobs and 18.2% more likely to work for the same employer after the birth of their first child. That's not just good for mothers, that's good for employers and our economy as a whole.

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