

Costs of full-time nursery soar to 8,000 pounds a year [UK] ^[1]

Society, The Guardian

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See text below.

Daycare Trust childcare costs survey 2008 ^[2]

EXCERPTS Parents are paying more than 8,000 pounds a year for a full-time nursery place, according to a survey of childcare costs which shows an annual above inflation increase in England for the sixth year in a row. While the extreme end of the cost spectrum is concentrated in the most expensive providers in London and the south-east - one West Sussex childminder charged 750 pounds a week, or 39,000 pounds a year - a typical nursery place for a baby or toddler under two now costs between more than 8,300 pounds in England and over 7,300 pounds in Scotland and Wales. The average weekly cost is 159 pounds - more than a third of average earnings of 457 pounds per week, according to figures published today by the Daycare Trust. That is 5% up on 2006. ... In a finding that will concern ministers, the survey also shows that the cost of an out-of-school club has increased by more than six times the inflation rate, with typical costs reaching 43 pounds for 15 hours a week. Daycare Trust called the development "particularly worrying" ahead of changes that will compel lone parents with a youngest child aged 12 or over actively to seek work from October this year. The survey shows the basic fees charged, and does not include the help available from the government through tax credits, childcare vouchers and free nursery places when a child is three. However, the complexity of the credits system and lack of publicity for other measures mean many parents could be missing out on help, the trust said. Alison Garnham, joint chief executive, urged parents to claim help on offer, including a universal entitlement to 12.5 hours of nursery education a week when their child is three. But she added: "Parents in the UK are still paying a bigger share - around 70% on average of this - spiralling cost than in Europe, where the average is nearer 30%." The government faced criticism from opposition parties, including accusations from the Liberal Democrat families spokeswoman, Susan Kramer, that high childcare costs "make a mockery of encouraging mothers to go out to work", while the Conservative spokeswoman Maria Miller called for a review of the childcare credit system. - reprinted from The Guardian

Related link: Is there a continental divide in counting the cost of childcare? ^[3]

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