

Breaking the piggy bank: Parents and the high price of child care

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts from the press release:

Breaking the Piggy Bank: Parents and the High Price of Child Care is an extensive nationwide survey of child care prices. The report finds that parents across the United States are struggling to meet the high cost of child care. Many families face a Catch-22. They need to work to support their families. They rely on child care to go to work. But, the high price of child care & a staggering \$3,016 to \$13,480 a year for one child & strains family budgets and forces parents to make sacrifices in the quality of care their children receive.

"The public hears a lot about rising health care costs. But, families are likely to spend more on child care than they do for health care and food combined," explained Linda Smith, Executive Director of NACCRRA.

"This is the real Parent Trap," Smith continued, "With child care costs as high or higher than housing costs in most states, middle income families struggle to afford any child care, much less child care that is of high quality. Parents want their children in safe, nurturing environments that prepare them for kindergarten, but they simply can't afford it in many cases. They are forced to compromise on quality. Considering the fact that nearly 12 million children under age 5 are in child care each week, this is a huge problem. But, it doesn't have to be this way."

Child care costs more for infants than it does for preschool-age children. Breaking the Piggy Bank ranks the top 10 least affordable states for preschool age care (New York, Minnesota, California, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Virginia, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington) as well as the top 10 least affordable states for infant care (Minnesota, Massachusetts, California, New York, Virginia, Illinois, Rhode Island, Washington, Arizona, Wisconsin, and Colorado).

The report calls for increased federal, state, and local investment in quality child care. "Just as we underwrite the cost of our nation's university system, we must make a broad-based investment to underwrite the cost of child care. There is simply no way to ensure that every child can enter school ready to succeed unless, as a society, we invest in quality child care," said Smith.

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