

Parents and the high cost of child care: 2013 report ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report ^[2]

Excerpts from related news article:

Child Care For One Infant Costs More Than Food For A Family Of Four: Report ^[3], Huffington Post, 5 Nov 13

A report released Monday revealed that the cost of child care has increased so dramatically that the average monthly fee for an infant in a child care center is now more expensive than the average cost of food for a family of four.

Titled "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care," the report was conducted by Child Care Aware of America, a federal information resource for parents and childcare providers. The study examined child care centers and did not account for different forms of care like nannies, relatives or babysitters. While researchers found great disparities in the cost of childcare across the country, the increase universally outpaced increases in average household income.

"Child care is a major expense in family budgets, often exceeding the cost of housing, college tuition, transportation or food," wrote Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D., executive director of Child Care Aware of America, in a release. "Unlike all other areas of education investment, including higher education, families pay the majority of costs for early education. These expenses come at a time when young families can least afford them."

Child care costs varied widely from state to state, ranging from \$4,863 per year in Mississippi to \$16,430 in Massachusetts. The report noted factors like cost of living and labor costs for the discrepancies.

The report revealed a few other anxiety-inducing figures as well:

- The cost of child care fees for two children exceeded housing costs for homeowners with a mortgage in 20 states.
- Child care fees for two children in a child care center exceeded annual median rent payments in every state.
- The annual average cost for an infant in center-based care was higher than a year's tuition and fees at a four-year public college.

Fraga urged readers not to interpret the results as a question of the high costs, but rather a call to action for lawmakers.

"Eleven million children younger than age 5 are in some form of child care. Ensuring this care is high-quality, affordable and available for families is crucial to our nation's ability to produce and sustain an economically viable, competitively positioned workforce," said Fraga. "Thanks to several federal policy proposals before Congress and other federal agencies, we are on the cusp of great leaps toward improving child care in this country."

-reprinted from the Huffington Post

Region: United States ^[4]

Tags: affordability ^[5]

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