

# Let's talk about childcare Actually let's SHOUT about childcare!

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## EXCERPTS:

Actually, let's shout about CHILDCARE!!

I know so many parents in two parent homes where one parent is working just to fork that paycheck over for childcare so their child or children are well taken care of so they can go to work and earn the paycheck that pays for childcare. Sometimes there's even a little bit left over for rent and all. And for single parents, childcare means a mishmash of friends, family, bits of professional childcare when you can afford it.

All until they turn 5 (except for before and after school care of course). Unless you are lucky enough to live in a place where there are public preschools or child development centers. And those numbers are LOW-in 2011-2012, 28 percent of 4-year-olds in the United States were in state-funded preschool, the same percentage as the year before. But that's a subject for another time.

We were talking about childcare. The average cost of center-based, as opposed to family home, daycare is \$972 a month or \$11,666 a year. The costs vary regionally and range from \$3,582 to \$18,773 a year.

For real. It means that in California, childcare costs range from almost half of a single mother's income to almost 15 percent of a married couple's income. In Texas, costs range from 36 percent of a single mother's income to almost 12 percent of a married couple's income. In other words, childcare is expensive.

Childcare isn't just about having some place for your child or children to be while you work. Childcare for infants and toddlers is education that has an effect on physical and emotional development as well as language acquisition. Quality childcare programs can provide for socialization and prepare children for successful participation in school later on. If you don't believe me, read the 2013 Parents and the High Cost of Childcare Report: "Children in higher quality early learning programs have better cognitive outcomes: measurably better language/ vocabulary, reading, math skills, and applied problem solving. These cognitive outcomes are particularly strong for low-income children."

The burden of this high-cost, highly important program rests heavily on the shoulders of individual parents and families. Why?! The entire society benefits from the education and well-being of children. Yet parents have to struggle in the ones and twos to provide their children access to what should be a right.

The crazy thing is that childcare workers are "one of the LOWEST paying professional fields" according to ChildCareAware. The average income for a full-time child-care professional in 2012 was \$21,310. For a family of four, a childcare worker earns below the poverty line-which is criminally low itself.

Bizarre. Workers pay so their children can be taken care of but the workers trained to take care of those children aren't paid enough to survive or care for their own children's needs!!

The system is broken. More than a trillion dollars are spent on war each year. Corporations (whose profits are created by working people) openly sneak out of billions of dollars in taxes each year. And what should be a very basic human right-access to quality care for infants and toddlers that prepares them for becoming productive members of society-is provided as a private service truly available only to those who can pay.

The resources exist to build and maintain public child development centers where trained professionals receive truly living wages to provide consistent, quality care to the infants and toddlers of working people. Us mamas and poppas need to get out our bullhorns and hit the streets and agitate for building a world where this is a priority-not the profits of the banks and corporations!

-reprinted from Liberation

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