

Does child care cost more than college where you live? ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

It is a common refrain: "I'm spending as much on child care a college education!"

For many families, it is true: child care costs more than public college in 31 states and Washington D.C. For 63 percent of American families with kids, either both parents or a single parent is working. The need for child care is immense and growing. And the expense can leave families struggling. Child care continues to be one of the most significant expenses in a family budget, often exceeding the cost of housing, transportation, food and even - depending on where you live - college.

During events following the State of the Union this week, President Obama has continued to highlight plans aimed at helping working families. This includes a plan to triple the maximum child care tax credit to \$3,000 and making investments to increase access to quality and affordable child care. More than 11 million children under five are in some form of child care in the United States, according to Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2014 Report, produced by Child Care Aware of America. For those families the average cost of center-based daycare in the U.S. is \$11,666 annually (or \$972 a month), according to the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. But prices vary widely, and the quality can vary greatly, too.

Not only does reliable, affordable child care keep family life from becoming an insufferable juggle, research suggests investing in child care is good for the economy, too. Studies show that increased access to quality, affordable child care raises employee morale and company loyalty, and can even save businesses as much as \$3 billion a year, according to Child Care Aware. What's more, experiences in quality learning environments during the earliest and most fundamental years of brain development set children up for a lifetime of success. Of children who arrive at school without the skills needed to succeed, more than 85 percent are still behind in fourth grade.

According to Child Care Aware there are 30 states in which the cost of caring for an infant in center-based care is greater than the average tuition cost at a public university there. This is in addition to Washington D.C., which leads the country in the raw cost of in-center child care at nearly \$21,948 a year. That's a whopping 202.2% greater than the \$7,268 cost of tuition there.

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Region: United States ^[3]

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