

# Capital facts: Child care cuts could cost us money <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Miller, Rich

**Source:** The Times

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 17 Mar 2015

## AVAILABILITY

Read Online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

Buried deep within Gov. Bruce Rauner's proposed budget plan for next fiscal year is yet another claimed "savings" which may not actually save any money, and could easily wind up costing the state more.

The governor proposes to save a whopping \$108 million by discontinuing child care services provided by relatives in the child's or relative's home.

At first glance, that cut might look prudent. Why should the state pay grandma to baby-sit her own grandkid? Is that some sort of scam? Go to any right-wing blog and you'll occasionally see stories bashing this whole idea.

But, in reality, by pulling those payments, which are designed to help low-income parents go to school and work their way out of poverty, "grandma" could lose her income and may very well have to find a different part-time job, meaning the parent then has to search for another provider and the state saves no money.

And because relatives who provide child care are exempt from all state licensing requirements, that child could end up at a licensed day-care provider, which costs the state a whole lot more money.

It's simple math. The rate the state pays for relative care, care in the child's home and for license exempt day care homes is \$16.22 per day.

But the rates paid for licensed day care centers varies from \$33.53 per day in parts of Downstate to \$46.49 per day in Chicago and the collar counties. So, we're talking about the potential of almost tripling the price per child in the region where most people live.

Licensed exempt day-care centers and licensed day care homes are cheaper, but they're still substantially more expensive than relative care, ranging from \$29.20 per day in parts of Downstate all the way up to \$40.50 in Chicago and the suburbs.

And even if the state ends up paying for non-relative care in the kids' own homes or at a license-exempt home day care provider, it costs the state the exact same money as it's paying now. So why even bother with this?

"Simply by eliminating one class of care, we don't necessarily eliminate those children from the system," explained Megan Meyer, spokesperson for the Ounce of Prevention Fund, which just happens to be run by the governor's wife. "Some families certainly may opt out, but others may choose licensed home or center-based care, all of which are more expensive."

Emily Miller with Voices For Illinois Children was far more blunt.

"Obviously I can't speak for the governor, but perhaps the governor thinks that someone else - like a child care (provider) - won't care for the kid, and the current child care provider will just continue to do it and not get paid. I don't see why that would happen. But there are a lot of magic assumptions in this budget."

Yes, there are a whole lot of "magic assumptions" in the governor's budget proposal. The thing is chock full of wishful thinking, like the \$2.2 billion savings from a pension reform plan which must be implemented by this coming July 1, but also can't be halted by a lawsuit, which is so unlikely there aren't enough decimal point zeroes in the world to give you the percentages of success. It's simply an impossible fairy tale.

Now, it's true that some relatives might very well volunteer to take care of the kids for free. That would be a great thing for the state, which wouldn't have to pick up the tab. But we're talking about economically distressed parents here, and they tend to come from poor families. So, while some money could be saved, it most certainly won't be \$108 million.

The governor's proposal, by the way, would also phase out child care subsidies for kids six and older.

"Over time, the total number of children who would lose access is about 65,000," said Miller of Voices for Children. "That's how many kids there are age 6 to 12 who are currently enrolled. It's over time because children over 5 who are already enrolled will continue to be as long as they remain enrolled."

Whatever you think about that proposed cut, at least that will produce the savings intended, as well as more future savings as it's phased in. So kudos for accuracy. Maybe not so much for humanity.

I asked the governor's press office for comment on all of these issues, but never heard back.

**Region:** United States <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** affordability <sup>[4]</sup>

funding <sup>[5]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[6]</sup>

spaces <sup>[7]</sup>

---

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/03/capital-facts-child-care-cuts-could-cost-us-money>  
**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/03/capital-facts-child-care-cuts-could-cost-us-money> [2]

<https://www.mywebtimes.com/articles/tn/2015/03/17/df69904c88f55d01a52c84813139325c/index.xml> [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> [7]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/spaces>