

America is in the middle of a child care crisis ^[1]

Blog

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EXCERPTS

In the United States, the average cost of child care has risen tremendously. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the costs of both childcare and nursery school have risen 168% since 1990. Today, the average cost of child care is approximately \$18,000 per year. For residents in 33 states and Washington, D.C., child care costs more than in-state college tuition. And for others, child care is more expensive than rent.

Families are well aware of the struggle to afford child care. Parents and child care providers are joining a Twitter chat today, #EarlyEdChat, at 2 p.m. EST with the Center for Community Change Action and Moms Rising to discuss how to afford child care, while ensuring their children's teachers are paid enough to care for their families too.

According to The Economy's Impact on Parents' Choices and Perceptions About Child Care 2010 Report, three-quarters of parents rate affordable child care as the most (31 percent) or one of the most (45 percent) important factors in helping working families. When parents were asked how often they worried that their total family income will not be enough to meet their family's expenses and bills, four in 10 (38 percent) said all or most of the time.

Not only is this basic need out of reach for many families, but most child care providers are not paid enough to care for their own families. According to a report released in November 2015 by the Economic Policy Institute, the median hourly wage for child care workers is \$10.31, — 39.3 percent below the \$17.00 median hourly wage of workers in other occupations. In addition to low wages, child care workers rarely receive job-based benefits. Only 15 percent of child care workers receive health insurance from their job and only 10 percent are covered by pension plans at their jobs. In 32 states and the District of Columbia, center-based infant care costs are equal to more than one-third of typical preschool worker earnings. In 21 states and the District of Columbia, non-preschool child care workers would have to spend over half of their annual earnings to pay for center-based infant care.

Child care workers are also 96 percent female, and are disproportionately workers of color. This is an issue that affects many working families and should be treated as a national economic priority. We must make high-quality child care affordable and accessible for everyone.

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Region: United States ^[3]

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