

Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016 ToolKit

About the ToolKit

The purpose of this toolkit is to share key messaging from our *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016* report to help you reach your desired audiences on various channels including newsletters, social media posts, and blog posts.

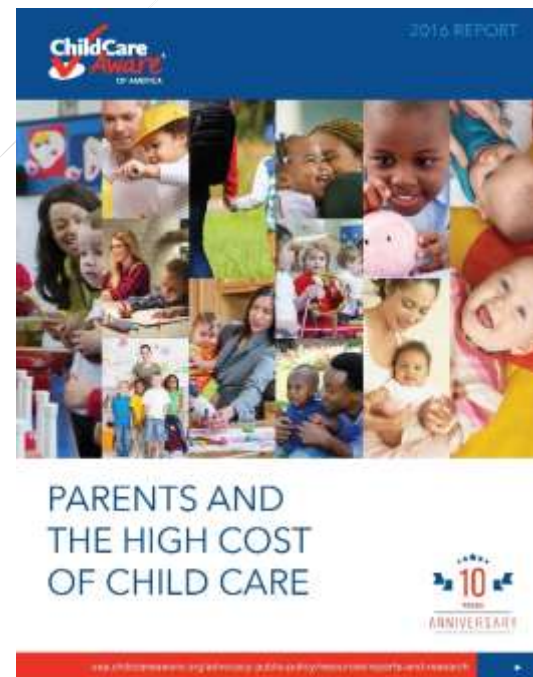
LinkedIn/Blog/Newsletter Posts

Child care is expensive—this is not new. In fact, our recently released 10th edition of the [Parents and the High Cost of Child Care](#) report reveals a continued trend of the burden that families face in finding and funding quality child care.

Families across the nation are struggling to afford child care. This includes:

- Millennial parents who are saddled with mountains of debt,
- Grandparents who have to work and contribute significantly to child care,
- Families who need child care coverage during the night shift or weekends,
- Immigrant parents who have a desire to raise their young children to appreciate both their culture of origin and their new country,
- Low income parents who desire quality child care as a means to better their child's long term outcomes but struggle to afford it, and
- Parents of children with special needs who can't find access services to help their children at an affordable cost.

We invite you to download the [Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016](#) report and explore information on the cost and affordability of child care across the country, including county-level data for four states (New Hampshire, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Minnesota). A new interactive map also allows users to quickly access a variety of cost data for each state, including county-level data for four states.



Key Findings

- Based on the US Dept. of Health and Human Services' standard that child care cost a family no more than 7% of their median income, center-based infant care is unaffordable in 49 states, plus D.C. Family child care for an infant is unaffordable in 45 states, plus D.C.
- While most experts agree that the majority of child care in the United States is "fair" quality, nearly 60 percent of parents reported their child receives "excellent" child care. Despite this, parents reported they had limited options and cost was the most common challenge in finding child care.
- Adjusted for inflation, U.S. businesses lose approximately \$4.4 billion annually due to employee absenteeism as the result of child care breakdowns.
- In many homes across the country, child care costs exceed the cost of housing, college tuition, transportation, or food.
- One year of center-based infant care costs more than a year of tuition at a 4-year public university in 30 states, plus the District of Columbia.

Social Media

Twitter

Access to affordable #ChildCare isn't just good for families, it's good for business! @USACHildcare #costofcare #childcareworks <Cost to business 1>

Stable, affordable #ChildCare is a MUST for the economy @USACHildcare #costofcare #childcareworks <Cost to business 1>

Want to help the economy? Provide families with affordable, reliable #ChildCare @USACHildcare #costofcare #childcareworks <Cost to business 1>

U.S. businesses lose about \$4.4B annually due to employee absenteeism as the result of #ChildCare are breakdowns @USACHildcare #costofcare <Cost to business 1>

Parents are best able to work when they have access to stable, high-quality, affordable #ChildCare @USACHildcare #costofcare <Cost to business 1>

#ChildCare providers are spending 50% of their income on care for their own children @USACHildcare #costofcare <Teacher 1>

Average hourly wage for #ChildCare workers in the U.S. was \$10.72 in 2015 - below 97% of all occupations @USACHildcare #costofcare <Teacher 1>

#ChildCare is unaffordable in 49 states plus DC @USACHildcare #costofcare <HHS Standard 1>

Louisiana is the only state with affordable center-based infant care via @USACHildcare #costofcare <HHS Standard 1>

For a single parent, center-based infant care in the most affordable county still costs 16.2% of family income via @USACHildcare #costofcare <Single Parent 1>

Cost of center-based infant care averaged over 40% of state median income for single mothers via @USACHildcare #costofcare <Single Parent 1>

#ChildCare fees for an infant in a center are > than the average amount families spend on food @USACHildcare #costofcare <Tuition/Mortgage 1>

Even for families of 3 earning an income 2x the federal poverty threshold, #ChildCare costs are a burden @USACHildcare #costofcare <Tuition/Mortgage 1>

Facebook

Post Text: Child Care Aware® of America's (link to Facebook.com/usachildcare) report, *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016*, reveals a continued trend of the burden that families face in finding and funding quality child care—highlighting changes in the child care landscape, including the identification of child care deserts, or areas with insufficient child care resources. Learn more about the cost of child care in the United States in Child Care Aware of America's (link to Facebook.com/usachildcare) report, *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016*.

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Edit Page Description: (leave as-is)

URL: <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>

Edit image: replace with one of the small infographic tiles (*toward the end of the toolkit*)

Post Text: In 2015, in all regions of the United States, average child care fees for an infant in a child care center are more than the average amount that families spend on food. Learn more about the cost of child care in the United States in Child Care Aware of America's (link to Facebook.com/usachildcare) report, *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016*.

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Edit Page Description: (leave as-is)

URL: <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>

Edit image: replace with one of the small infographic tiles (*toward the end of the toolkit*)

Post Text: In 2015, in 30 states plus the District of Columbia, the average annual cost for an infant in center-based care was higher than a year's tuition and fees at a four-year public college. Learn more about the cost of child care in the United States in Child Care Aware of America's (link to Facebook.com/usachildcare) report, *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016*. Learn more about the cost of child care in the United States in Child Care Aware of America's (link to Facebook.com/usachildcare) report, *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016*.

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URL: <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>

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Post Text: But just how expensive is child care? The latest report finds that the average cost for an infant in center-based care can be as much as \$17,082 annually, or \$12,796 annually for a four-year-old, which

rivals what the average family pays for one year of college tuition at a four year institution. Child care fees also exceed the average amount that families spend on food; further, the cost of full-time, center-

based care for two children is the highest single household expense in most parts of the country.

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National Press Release

Report Shows Child Care Too Expensive for Today's Families

Quality, Affordable Child Care Out of Reach for Most Americans, Costing More than a Year's College Tuition, Housing, Transportation, or Food

Arlington, VA, December 6, 2016 – Child Care Aware® of America's (CCAoA) 10th annual report researching child care costs in counties and states across the U.S. shows families can't afford child care in 49 of 50 states.

"Quality, affordable child care is one of the most important investments we can make for our children," said Child Care Aware® of America Executive Director, Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D. "Investments made when children are very young will generate returns that accrue over a child's entire life."

The [Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016](#) report reveals the trend in lack of access to quality, affordable child care shows no signs of stopping. Families and single parents are struggling to afford quality child care and are looking for solutions. This year's report summarizes the cost and affordability of child care throughout the U.S. and provides an overview of the child care landscape and the strategies that states and communities are using to help parents afford child care. This year, the report goes a step further and includes county-by-county analysis of child care costs in the states of Arizona, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New Hampshire.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced a new standard of affordability for child care fees—from 10 percent of family income or less to 7 percent of family income or less. By this new benchmark, Child Care Aware® of America's latest report finds only one state, Louisiana,

qualifies as affordable for a married family paying for infant child care. And in 39 states and the District of Columbia, the average cost of center-based care for an infant is higher than 10 percent of median income for a married couple with children.

The cost of full-time, center-based care for two children continues to be the number one single household cost in most parts of the U.S. In every state, the average cost of center-based infant child care is more than 24 percent of median income for single parents. The average cost for an infant in center-based care child care can be as high as \$17,082 per year, or \$12,796 annually for a four-year-old. This rivals what the average family pays for one year of college tuition at a four year institution, housing, transportation or food.

The cost of child care is especially difficult for families living at or below the federal poverty level. For these families, full-time center-based child care for an infant ranges from a low of 17 percent of family income to a high of 42.5 percent.

Families at or Below Poverty Level

State	Percent of Family Income Used to Pay Child Care
Mississippi	17%
Massachusetts	42.5%

Even for families of three earning income at twice the federal poverty level threshold (i.e., \$40,180), child care is a significant burden. Nationwide, families are losing nearly \$30 billion per year in wages due to the high cost of child care. American businesses lose more than \$4 billion per year due to gaps in child care and lack of access to it.

The report also shows child care workers are affected by the high costs of care. Child care teachers with strong professional preparation are essential to providing a high quality early learning program. The report says the quality of adult-child interactions is one of the most powerful predictors of children's development and learning. More than 90 percent of a child's brain develops before age five. In every state, the report found child care teachers would need to spend more than half their income to afford child care for their own children. And in 14 states plus the District of Columbia, more than 100 percent of the median child care teacher's income is needed to put two children in center-based care.

“Our 10th anniversary report is being released at a critical juncture for our nation. We continue to partner with policymakers and the new administration to make child care a national priority and to ensure quality, affordable, accessible child care is a reality for all working families,” Fraga said. “If we don’t invest in our nation’s child care system, future generations will continue to be affected.”

The report states the benefits of quality, affordable child care are significant to society as a whole as well as to children. Long-term benefits to society include higher test scores and high school graduation rates, a greater likelihood of gainful employment, and less likelihood of incarceration or using illegal drug use.

Solutions

With the release of the *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016* report, Child Care Aware® of America recommends the following to improve America’s child care system:

- Invest in child care by increasing funding around the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which could be used to expand the supply of child care and promote the quality of care;
- Limit the cost burden for families by raising dependent care limits for deductions or providing additional tax credits for families and providers, creating public-private partnerships to invest in child care in local communities and looking to states which already have developed successful financial models as case examples for other states and communities;
- Streamline eligibility standards and procedures for parents and prioritize professional development for the child care workforce; and
- Join the movement at childcareworks.org, and let your voice be heard.

The Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2016 report is available for download at usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare. This year’s report also includes a new interactive map that allows users to quickly access a variety of cost data for each state, including county level data for four states.

About Child Care Aware® of America

Child Care Aware® of America is our nation’s leading voice for child care. CCAoA works with state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and other community partners to ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable child care. CCAoA leads projects that increase the quality and availability of child care, offer comprehensive training to child care professionals, undertake

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research, and advocate for child care policies that improve the lives of children and families. To learn more, visit usa.childcareaware.org. Follow them on Twitter [@USACHildCare](https://twitter.com/USACHildCare) and on Facebook at facebook.com/usachildcare.

Images and Graphics

Cost to Business 1



Teacher 1



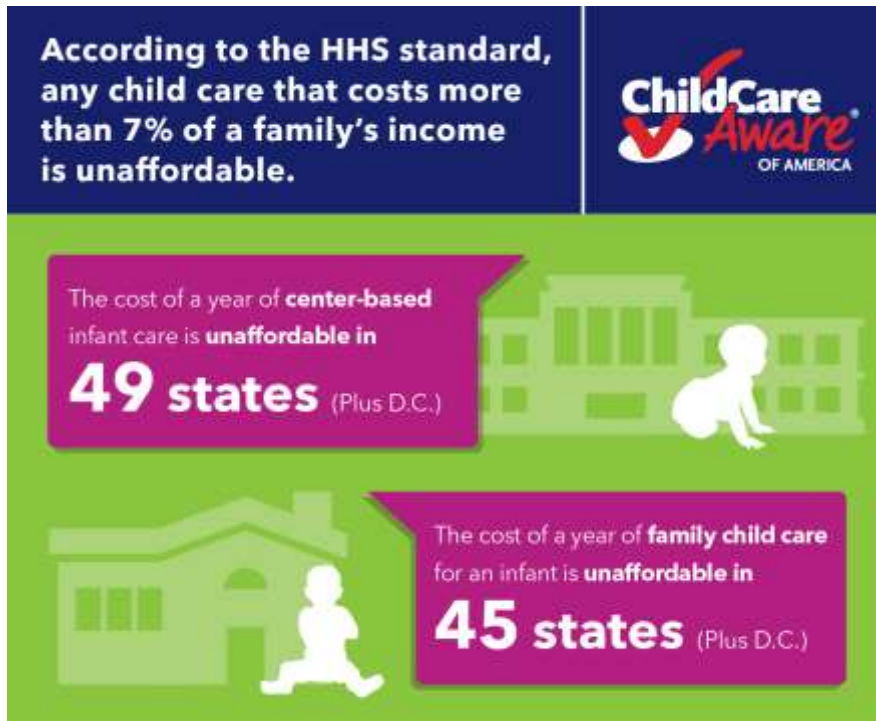
Child care providers don't make enough money to afford child care for their children

In every state in the U.S., a child care worker with **two children pays more than half of their income** toward child care.

ChildCare Aware OF AMERICA

The infographic features a dark blue background on the left with a money bag icon. The right side has a green background with a map of the U.S. and icons of a baby and a girl. A large equals sign is placed between the child icons and a stack of money.

HHS Standard 1



According to the HHS standard, any child care that costs more than 7% of a family's income is unaffordable.

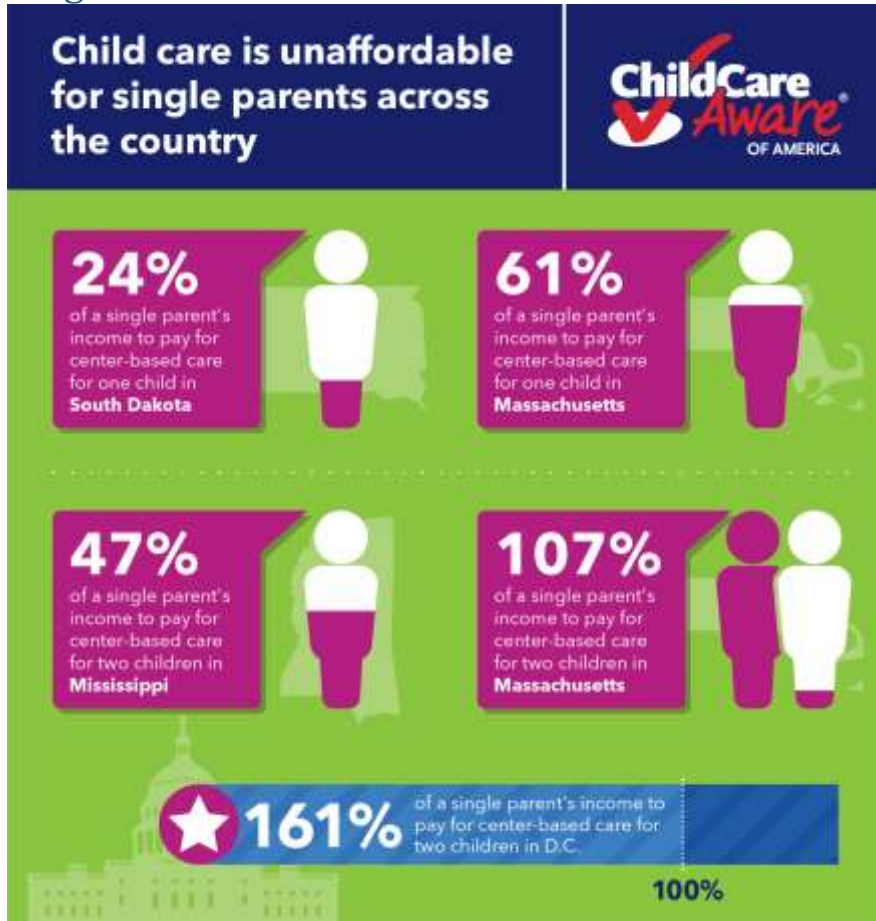
ChildCare Aware OF AMERICA

The cost of a year of **center-based** infant care is **unaffordable** in **49 states** (Plus D.C.)

The cost of a year of **family child care** for an infant is **unaffordable** in **45 states** (Plus D.C.)

The infographic has a dark blue top section with the HHS standard text and the ChildCare Aware logo. The bottom section is green with icons of a center and a home, and text boxes providing state counts for unaffordable care.

Single Parent 1



Tuition/Mortgage 1

For many families, child care is less affordable than college tuition or the annual cost of a home mortgage.



Center-based infant care is **more expensive** than one year of **college tuition** at a 4-year public university in 30 states plus D.C.



Center-based care for two children is **more expensive** than the **median mortgage** in 35 states plus D.C.

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To create an infographic for your state, use this customizable tool: http://usa.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/customizable_state_slides.pptx.

Additional resources can be found at usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare.

Child Care Cost Fact Sheets

Print-friendly state child care cost fact sheets can be accessed here:

<http://usa.childcareaware.org/state-child-care-cost-fact-sheets/>