

AVOID THE CLIFF

LET FAMILIES TAKE FLIGHT!



**FAMILIES ALL OVER THE USA ARE ALREADY
STRUGGLING TO ACCESS AFFORDABLE, HIGH-QUALITY
CHILD CARE. THEY NEED YOUR ACTION NOW.
THESE ARE SOME OF THEIR STORIES.**



Dear Member of Congress,

Moms are in every community. Moms are part of hardworking families, moms own small and large businesses, moms make our worlds go around. This adds up to moms being critically important engines that drive our economy. To boost our economy, hardworking families need the tools and opportunities to help make everything work – and that means providing for foundational policies and programs like child care and Head Start, all which require increased investment, not cuts.

The bottom line is: families can't work if their childcare isn't working for them, and children and families are barred from a thriving life if they can't access the basics. Things are breaking down for families across the board – this is not the time for cuts or cliffs. And without action, that cliff is quickly on the horizon. Pandemic-era federal funding is set to expire at the end of September. According to the most recent analysis from the Century Foundation, over 70,000 child care programs will likely close without additional funding and about 3.2 million children could lose their child care spots – making child care access even harder for families.¹

Much like the roads we drive on, the clean water we drink, and the healthcare that is provided to us in our old age, child care is a public good that all of us benefit from whether or not we have young children. Yet, our nation's current situation is truly concerning. Too many families cannot find or afford child care. More than 1/2 of families live in an area without enough available child care to provide safe, nurturing, affordable options.² The further loss of access to care is exacerbating the nation's worker shortage as parents, especially moms, have no choice but to stay at home.

On top of all this, child care costs continue to remain prohibitive for too many families. Families with an infant or toddler spend about 50 percent more on child care than families with a preschooler, with the price of infant care being higher than public college tuition in most states.³ It's also important to note that early educators are being paid poverty-level wages and too often struggle just to support their own families. Child care workers need to be paid family-supporting wages.

When parents have reliable child care we miss less work, we stay in the workforce, we are able to concentrate more, and our children thrive in social and supportive settings. That's good for our employers, our families, and the economic health of our community.

Our elected leaders cannot say they support families if they do not support deep investments in child care and Head Start. We need to create systems of care that meet the needs of children, families, and communities. This is why we are raising our voices and sharing our stories to say we need Congress to take action to protect and expand these programs NOW!

Sincerely,

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner
Co-founder and Executive Director
MomsRising | MamásConPoder

Lauren Hipp
National Director
MomsRising | MamásConPoder

Nina Perez
National Director
MomsRising | MamásConPoder

1. [Child Care Cliff: 3.2 Million Children Likely to Lose Spots with End of Federal Funds](#), The Century Foundation

2. [Child Care Deserts](#), Center for American Progress

3. [Investing in Infant and Toddler Care](#), Center for American Progress

ALABAMA

Michelle Durham was an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in Ohatchee, Alabama whose job often required her to lift patients on stretchers into an ambulance. When she became pregnant, her health care provider imposed a restriction on heavy lifting. Michelle asked Rural/Metro for a temporary modified duty assignment during her pregnancy, but was rejected, despite the company's policy of giving such assignments to EMTs injured on the job. She was told that her only option was to take unpaid leave for the duration of her pregnancy.

The loss of income caused significant financial hardship: she had to move in with her grandmother and incurred credit card and medical debt. A few years ago, a lower court judge approved the employer's actions and dismissed her case, erroneously relying on pre-*Young v. UPS* precedent to conclude that EMTs injured on the job were not "similarly situated" to Durham, within the meaning of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act. ACLU appealed the case to the Eleventh Circuit. The case is pending.

– Anonymous, AL

ALASKA

When both my daughters were in a high-quality daycare center, the tuition was more than my mortgage. Finding affordable daycare is a critical issue for working families.

– Denise, Juneau, AK

ARIZONA

I am a single mother with a single income. I have not been able to put my son in child care for the last three years. We need affordable childcare I'm barely able to survive I am below the poverty line. I am not the only one. We need it now!

– Laura, Phoenix, AZ

ARKANSAS

I'm a mother of 3 girls, only one is school age. My husband works 7am-4pm at his job and I work 330pm-1130 at night at my job, I'm bringing my kids to my elderly mother and his mother for the couple of hours that no one is home. I miss my 1st grader as I only see



**THE LACK OF
AFFORDABLE, HIGH-QUALITY
CHILD CARE
COSTS ABOUT
\$57 BILLION/YEAR
IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY,
WAGES, AND REVENUE**

SOURCE: <https://www.ffyf.org/child-care-and-pre-k-are-strategic-economic-investments-impact-on-employment-and-earnings/#:~:text=One%20study%20found%20a%20%2457,high%2Dquality%2C%20affordable%20care.>

her for the hour she is getting ready 5 days a week and on the weekends. I see my husband for 10 minutes in the morning as he has to leave at 6 when I wake up, and I see him on the weekends.

I miss my husband so much. I'm forced into working the 2nd shift since child care is so expensive. If I could afford it I would move to day shift. Child care expenses really need to change. Parents are out here working for little pay for their families just to actually have a couple of hours with them. It's torture.

– Emily, Bismark, AR

Affordable childcare should not be a luxury for parents. We live in central Arkansas and on average families are spending \$600-\$1,000 per month PER CHILD. My husband and I both work full-time and only have one child, a nine-month-old, but I don't know what we'll do if we conceive another anytime soon. Not to mention, many daycares have long waitlists and are short staffed.

– Anonymous, Mayflower, AR

CALIFORNIA

I struggled to find good child care and when I lost care, I was not able to fulfill my career aspirations because I couldn't finish an important project. If I had been able to finish that project, I would have the endorsement I needed to get my dream job. I ended up down a different career path to pay the bills and it still breaks my heart.

I am also in student debt because of paying for child care and now cannot buy a house.

– Anonymous, Sonoma, CA

COLORADO

I have a 6 month old daughter. I would have loved to take a full year to stay home caring for her, but by the time she reached 3 months, we had exhausted the credit cards and put off debt for too long so I needed to work to provide for my family. (That issue might have been solved if we had a national parental leave program but alas).

There are a few daycares around us that we looked into. Nearly every one of them had a year long waitlist. Luckily, we found one that could take us.

We pay \$414 a week for 3 days. That's well over \$21k which is roughly half of my husband's income. We've thought about having him be a stay at home dad, but what income he does bring in, we do really need to help pay off medical debt from my daughter's birth and our student loan debt.

I don't have rich ambitions. I want to live in a comfortable environment and raise the child we waited so long for. I want her to grow in a safe learning environment. I would like to stop stressing about money for just one minute. What do less fortunate families do?! We are far from destitute, and yet, the cost for childcare is devastating us. We had dreamed about our little girl for years and tried to wait and plan as best as possible, and I honestly don't fault the people who decide not to have children because of the expense. If America doesn't start supporting its families, it will soon see a childless future.

– Heather, Denver, CO

CONNECTICUT

I'm in the process of trying to find affordable childcare for my two children while I go back to work full-time and go to school part-time. At this point, I am at a loss, because for both of them to go to daycare will cost almost my entire paycheck per week. I can't afford to

PRE-PANDEMIC, MORE THAN HALF OF FAMILIES LIVED IN CHILDCARE DESERTS



Without safe, nurturing, affordable options to begin with, and now nearly half a million families are estimated to be stranded without reliable child care

SOURCE: <https://www.ffyf.org/child-care-and-pre-k-are-strategic-economic-investments-impact-on-employment-and-earnings/#:~:text=One%20study%20found%20a%20%2457,high%2Dquality%2C%20affordable%20care.>

NOT go back to work, and I can't afford TO go back to work. What is someone like me, who is trying to build a better life and future for her children supposed to do?

– Kellianne, Brandford, CT

DELAWARE

We could really use extra childcare as my wife and I establish ourselves. Though we are both well and able, my wife needs to spend more time learning English and I need to focus on working and getting a master's degree. A fully funded childcare program would be extremely important in helping us maintain a livelihood while also ensuring that our little one gets the care she deserves. I don't see any viable way forward for new families otherwise.

– Adam, Newark, DE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

As a working mother, my family's bills are high: there are student loans, there are groceries, there are utilities, there's housing, and there is childcare. At a cost of \$1,170 a month, childcare is a major out-of-pocket expense for my family. Even then, I'm lucky; my five-year-old spends most of the day in her public kindergarten, which is free;

“As a single mom to special needs children, for many years I struggled to hold down a job as no childcare providers in our area were available for my children...As a result, my children and I experienced extreme poverty.”

– Destinee, Leesburg FL

her monthly childcare costs are only the \$270 I pay for aftercare. And the \$900 I spend on my two-year-old's care is less than half what I paid for her when she was still one. For infants in Washington, D.C., full-day childcare costs an average of nearly \$2,000 a month.

– Joan, Washington, DC

FLORIDA

As a single mom to special needs children, for many years I struggled to hold down a job as no childcare providers in our area were available for my children. Either they didn't have the right training to care for autistic children, or they were so far overpriced, I would've needed to work nearly 24 hours a day to afford just the daycare alone. I couldn't get the help I needed to pay for the childcare because I wasn't employed; but I needed the childcare to be employed so I could qualify for the assistance. It was a vicious cycle.

As a result, my children and I experienced extreme poverty. At one point, we lived in a home without hot water or a working stove, because the water heater and stove ran on gas and I couldn't afford to pay for the gas to be hooked up. We lived in sketchy neighborhoods, in homes run down by lack of care long before we moved in, with no security and, on occasion, no locks.

As my children finally were of an age to enter the school system, I still struggled to find work because I could only work during school hours, and often had to leave to take my children to various therapy appointments or to pick up my child from the school because the school could not handle them.

Politicians tout their desire to end childhood poverty, and yet this simple thing - affordable, appropriate childcare - has been unaddressed for decades. Families like mine live in a never-ending loop of poverty because childcare reforms have not happened. My children are 11, 9, and 6; my struggle is not over yet.

Childcare reforms to help address the sky-high costs and the unavailability of appropriate care of special needs children would save my children from spending the rest of their childhoods in the cycle of poverty we've fallen into.

– Destinee, Leesburg FL

GEORGIA

I started my federal career in November of 2005 as a federal contractor with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I had 2 little ones when I started working and during my time working at CDC I conceived another child and had a son. My cost for childcare for 3 children was \$360.00 per week and that was a discounted fee for parents with multiple children. Starting off, my salary was \$34,000.00 and that meant after I paid childcare each week, I had roughly \$100.00 left to take care of gas, groceries, etc. My husband and I soon decided after trying to maintain for over a year that we would be better off if I stayed home with my kids until 2 of them were at least in kindergarten.

– Anonymous, GA

HAWAII

I am the grandmother of two. My daughter is a single mother. I am providing child care for the 3 year old as she can't afford to place them both in child care. As a 60-year-old woman, I am too old to keep up with an active and inquisitive 3 year old!

– Kate, Honolulu, HI

IDAHO

Our toddler has been on a daycare waitlist for half a year now. We got on the wait list at a state accredited daycare back in early May 2021, meaning this daycare

participates in additional educational benchmark set by the state. It's also the closest one to our house. They initially thought we'd have a spot by July but now it's looking like we won't have a spot until early 2022. They said they it's been hard keeping staff and attracting new staff.

Until that happens, I'm working a fraction of what I would otherwise and our family income is down by about 40%. We spend less, we skip what we can and we budget closely. Quality childcare is not a private family issue, it means we're setting aside less for our kids' in-state college savings, we buy less from our local economy and we pay less taxes on purchases. My local small business employer is also directly impacted by my lack of availability.

– Britt, Meridian, ID

ILLINOIS

As a mom of twins with severe special needs, I never went back to work in spite of the MBA from a top school. The cost of child care along with their high needs made it impossible to even think about. Even when they reached school age and attended regularly, it was obvious that there was no backup for me even though I have a very supportive husband. If child care for all had been available, it might have been a different story, but I was too tired finding appropriate schools to start looking for more challenges. Most people applaud me for all I have done for my children but few realize that I paid a big financial price.

– Pamela, Chicago, IL

INDIANA

My daughter had to take a second job to be able to afford child care on the two days that family can't help her. It's awful for her and more time away from her baby. It's so expensive.

– Michelle, Fort Wayne, IN

I found out, because my son attended Head Start, that he has a speech impairment. Because I got him in Head Start at 4 they were able to catch it and have someone working with him before he started school. He was also young enough that it wouldn't be a permanent impairment.

– Manetric, Indianapolis, IN

“Both my husband and I worked full time and our monthly childcare expense was like a second mortgage. We were both making a decent amount of money and it was still a challenge...”

– Rachel, Davenport, IA

I'm a full-time working mother with two children in full time daycare, ages 1 and 4. Fortunately I have a wonderful education centered daycare facility in our town. However, affording it can be a struggle. I pay more per month in child-care expenses than I do for my mortgage. My husband was laid off from the Elevator Constructors Union 16 months ago; he continues to work part time but we haven't dared pull our girls out of day-care for fear of being without quality care when he is called back to work due to waiting lists at our child care facility. I don't complain about paying for quality child care, as I see the educational benefits already in my 4 year old.

– Kathleen, Chesterton, IN

IOWA

It was difficult to find high quality childcare that was affordable and with two kids it was very difficult to make ends meet. Both my husband and I worked full time and our monthly childcare expense was like a second mortgage. We were both making a decent amount of money and it was still a challenge, it would be even more stressful and difficult for single parents and those making minimum wage. Countries that are comparable to the USA have managed this better, it is time to support parents and families.

– Rachel, Davenport, IA

KANSAS

I was in a transition to teaching program and had secured a job to teach at the high school level this fall. I searched for daycare months before I had received a job offer, even putting my name on lists that charged non-refundable fees to get on their lists, even though they were unlikely to have a spot open. Most places wouldn't even take my name down because their waiting lists were so full.

I finally found an in-home daycare with an immediate opening, so I paid a fee to hold the spot and made a schedule to send my infant part time for the month before my job started to gently transition him into daycare.

After two weeks of just a few half days of care, the in-home provider informed me that he was too much work and basically kicked him out for developmentally normal infant attachment behavior. Leaving me with just two weeks to find alternate care.

A friend offered to watch my son, and then backed out the next day. I contacted another in-home provider and they refused to even meet with us since we had been asked to leave the other provider. Another in-home daycare quit answering my messages when I asked if she was vaccinated. I signed up for care.com and found someone I could afford for only two days a week. I spent my last week before the teaching job started filling out paperwork and finding a tax account so that I could legally pay the nanny.

My mom, who is in her late sixties with a chronic health condition said she could provide the rest of the care. I started the teaching job, but since I had to rush home immediately after the contracted hours of teaching, I quickly found that I was unable to keep up with lesson planning and grading, even if I woke up at 3 or 4 am to work before going to school.

I quit my teaching job, and since I wasn't fully licensed due to my transition to teaching status, I will NEVER be able to try to become a teacher using an alternate licensing route. Now I have no job and can't look for one as I still don't have daycare for my son. Additional stress is that now that I have to be on my husband's employer provided health insurance, the cost for just the premium for family health insurance is literally 25 percent of his net pay. We're draining our savings account just to pay our mortgage and buy groceries.

I attended a virtual job fair to investigate jobs at daycares where I could potentially also take my son. None of the daycares had spots available for my son, but even

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MARKET MADE POSITIVE
GAINS THIS PAST JAN 2022
BUT 27 TIMES
MORE MEN
THAN WOMEN
JOINED THE LABOR
FORCE DURING
THIS TIME**



SOURCE: <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Jan-Jobs-Day.pdf>

if they did and I got a discount on daycare by being an employee, my entire net pay at the center would go to the daycare. So, what's the point of working if you don't bring any money home and you're paying someone else to watch your baby?

– Anonymous, Wichita, KS

KENTUCKY

I qualified for Child Care Assistance most of the time. While in the military, I was even able to watch my children from my computer because cameras were everywhere. However, once outside of the military, daycare support stopped after 5pm. I lost my support system. Parents work long after 5 pm and long before 6:30am. As for the cost, providers want premium pay to watch children 24/7. Two things a mom cannot be without is daycare and transportation. Between the two, income is wiped out. Women are not 'crazy'. We are just stretched thin and stressed to the max.

– Marie, Oak Grove, KY

LOUISIANA

My husband and I have a beautiful 3-year-old son. It's been extremely difficult to keep him in daycare. The weekly fee is \$110. With me taking a huge pay cut after

Hurricane Katrina, almost \$10,000 less a year now and my husband taking a huge cut as well. I have applied for Child-care Assistance only to be turned down twice this year alone.

First we made too much (I bring home under \$700 every two weeks and our mortgage is \$985, and that doesn't include food and utilities and basic necessities).

I just applied again about 1 month ago, in desperation due to the fact that my husband has now lost his job, not knowing that now both parents have to still be currently working to receive assistance – it doesn't count that you are out every day looking for a new job.

So now I'll have to take my son out of daycare because we can't afford the tuition and keep him home with dad but at the same time dad needs to be out pounding the pavement applying for new jobs, which he can't do with a 3 year old tagging along with him. I hate this. It's very stressful for us right now. It's a tug-of-war...pay the mortgage, buy food, or pay daycare, or skip the mortgage this month and buy his asthma meds.

– Collete, New Orleans, LA

MAINE

We have 3 kids ages 6 and under and spend about \$600 per week in childcare costs, thankfully we have great jobs that pay well but it seems that we're forced to work twice as much to afford quality care. That leaves us with less time with family and exhausted parents, yet we are bound to the perpetual system until there is a better solution.

– Jennifer, Scarborough, ME

MARYLAND

I became pregnant with our second child during the early pandemic. My husband and I were lucky enough to both keep our jobs, continue working from home and have our 2-year-old son already in a good quality daycare center close to home. We knew though that we weren't going to be able to afford to send a second child to that same daycare, especially with the strains they were facing on staffing because of the pandemic.

So we started looking into alternatives that could work for us and after several months of deliberation, we decided to try matching with an au pair from abroad. We spent months interviewing, preparing, reading up and trying to find the right fit. We finally settled on a candidate and she agreed to arrive in June 2021. Our

daughter was born in February and our son was pulled from daycare to begin being at home with us in May.

The transition was incredibly difficult for everyone, and after only a month of trying to make it work, the au pair decided to leave and rematch with another family. I needed reliable care that was going to last as soon as possible so we skipped rematching with an au pair (which cost us almost \$3000 in fees) to find another daycare in our area.

I had to take two weeks off from work to watch my children and find space for them. Some daycares had waitlists into fall of 2022. We managed to find a space for both children somewhere on the other side of town that we could afford but only at the very last minute. It was a struggle especially because my daughter refused to eat from a bottle, and eventually we had to find another solution. The director from my sons previous daycare let me know that they were going to have space for both of my children in the fall, so we jumped on the opportunity because it was close by and we knew them, but they had increased the rates by \$200 a month and were no longer offering a sibling discount. We bit the bullet simply because we could no longer take time to try and sort the issue.

We had spent months trying to find suitable childcare that would work for us to no avail and with some serious revamping of our budget we are managing to pay almost twice our mortgage on daycare for both children.

We've also already had two covid scares, an RSV scare and croup and we've only been there for a month. It is incredibly taxing and exhausting to go through all this just so I can keep working and put food on the table.

– Gwendolyn, Frederick, MD

MASSACHUSETTS

I work for the WIC program as a Family Support Coordinator, providing our WIC participants with various resources, including childcare. SO many of our participants want to work but cannot because they cannot afford childcare, or there is nothing available for their children.

Many participants have had to leave work because of the lack of childcare during Covid, and have suffered greatly from this loss. It was better when I had small children, as there was a component of TAFDC that actually paid for childcare for students and low-income working people – at least I did not experience having to be put on a long, 1- 3 year waiting list; by the time there are openings or available vouchers, many people do not

need the childcare anymore, since their children can then go to school or preschool. Lack of childcare is one of the biggest barriers to self-sufficiency, and needs to be addressed!!

– Margie, Easthampton, MA

MICHIGAN



I have worked in the early childhood field for 6 years now. Three years ago, I became a mother and I had to leave the program I worked for. I had to leave the families and children I formed strong relationships with, and leave the staff who relied on me. All because I could not afford to cost of child care on top of the cost of living with the wage I made at that program. I was denied assistance from the state at the time because, “they were not going to pay for me to watch my own child,” even though I was not working with that age group.

Luckily, I was able to remain in the field, when I found a position at another child care program that offered discounted child care for employees. Even now with discounted child care, it is our biggest expense and we still struggle financially. We need to take care of child care staff who have children and treat their needs the same as any other family who needs assistance.

We need these teachers to stay in the field so we can meet the ever rising demand for child care. Without supporting the teachers and the backbones of the field, we will never be able to solve the child care crisis.

– Sadie, Pellston, MI

MINNESOTA

I have always had a strong career drive and I am incredibly passionate about what I do. When I became a mom I started to feel pulled in two directions. I needed

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– Sadie, Pellston, MI

to keep up my career for myself, but I also needed to see to it that my daughter was receiving the best care possible. If I couldn’t be home with her 24/7, then I needed to find a care provider that I felt would do the job just as well as I could. Doesn’t everyone deserve that for their child?

The problem is, daycare is now taking up half of my income. I work in health care and a fairly well-paying job, and I can still barely stay afloat. My entire income is taken up by my mortgage and daycare costs. Luckily my husband is also working and is able to cover the rest of our bills and necessities. We are both earning fairly well and work full time, but between the two of us, we are treading water.

We make just enough to meet our needs. We would love to have more kids, but we know that we quickly wouldn’t be able to afford those increased childcare costs, and we can’t afford to have either of us stay home full time. It should never come to families having to plan their own family structure around childcare costs.

The saddest part is that I think my husband and I are incredibly lucky to be in the position we are in. We are making enough, we are both working and we can just barely afford quality child care.

What if we didn't have those pieces in place? What if I were a single parent? What if either of us were laid off or had a pay cut? Parents should not have to compromise for the care of their child. We all need access to more affordable childcare.

– Julie, St. Paul, MN

MISSISSIPPI

At the age of 3, my child was declared developmentally delayed by specialists. As a result, he was accepted into the only preschool program in the area funded by public funds. There are a few other preschools in the county, but are run by area churches that require membership in order to accept children into their programs.

By the time he entered elementary school, my child was at the same level of other kids in his class. At the age of 7, he made into the Venture program for gifted children. My child's is a success story. Without the support of childcare professionals, he would've never made.

– Julieta, Brandon, MS

MISSOURI

Child care costs have made it so difficult for our family. We have to figure out meals base on a \$60 a week budget (milk being \$15 of that). We can't save, we can't get caught up on debt and we don't qualify for financial assistance. Child care costs the same as our mortgage per month. We are struggling and are considered middle class. I can't imagine how others worse off than us are managing.

– Anonymous, Springfield, MO

MONTANA

As a mom to be who is having twins this summer, learning about how expensive childcare is, and limited resources are, it has been so stressful. It feels very wrong that as someone with a master's and "good job" and a partner with the same that we are very worried about how we will afford the cost of childcare. It seems very wrong that being pregnant and growing a family should be tainted by the expense and lack of access to good childcare.

– Anonymous, Missoula, MT

INVESTMENTS IN HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE COULD BOOST WOMEN'S LIFETIME EARNINGS BY \$130 BILLION



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NEBRASKA

As a full-time Air National Guard family, we do not live near a large military base, but still have childcare needs for our two toddlers. We have STRUGGLED to find quality, affordable care that compares to anything like what we had on Active Duty. We have waited on year-long waitlists for our boys and during that time only one parent could be on military orders at a time while we waited for placement.

We had a nanny for a time since we had no other option, but her costs skyrocketed and we had to let her go. Childcare in our city is extremely hard to come-by and this isn't just for military members-this is for EVERYONE. We need a change in this country to support families of all types. [I recently read that Pres. Biden is reviewing the tier-based childcare costs military families pay as an option for his new national program and I am happy to lend my expertise on that.]

– Chelsy, Omaha, NE

NEVADA

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“After a frantic search (and some unpaid time off work), we eventually found a place that we very much like. We wouldn’t trade it, but my wife and I (both working professionals with advanced degrees) now pay nearly 1/4 of our total take-home pay for care for our son.”

– Scott, Albuquerque, NM

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– Anonymous, Reno, NV

NEW HAMPSHIRE

I am a single mother of a 12-year-old son. I work in the health care setting so in addition to needing after school, summer, holiday and school break help, I work every other weekend at a hospital and require weekend help as well. My son has been through a wide array of child care options. Nannies, sitters, after school programs, friends

and family. On average I spend \$350 to \$500 per month on childcare. My childcare choices are very unpredictable and rarely remain consistent.

As my son gets older his needs are changing. Instead of childcare, he needs more of a mentor who can provide companionship, and support, who can get him to after school sports and activities and remain a constant in his life.

My experience with childcare continues to be a challenge. There are simply not enough options, and rarely have I found anything that is creative, nurturing, and quality one on one environments for my son. The cost of childcare is also a challenge and is a large part of my budget.

– Janet, Peterborough, NH

NEW JERSEY

Childcare is ridiculously expensive, and if we have a second child, I may have to think about quitting my job because sending two kids to daycare is more than 2/3 of my take home pay.

– Kate, Fords, NJ

NEW MEXICO

Finding good childcare was a frustrating experience. The university where I work has a fantastic childcare program, but the waiting list for infants less than 1 year old is more than 2 years - we would have had to pay to be on the waiting list for over a year before even trying to get pregnant!

So we went to the private sector and found a nice place very near my office. We got on the waiting list, but after my son was born and my wife had to return to work, the director informed us that there was no room in their infant class.

After a frantic search (and some unpaid time off work), we eventually found a place that we very much like. We wouldn’t trade it, but my wife and I (both working professionals with advanced degrees) now pay nearly 1/4 of our total take-home pay for care for our son. And the cost of the program is in line with others around the city, it isn’t some kind of ‘Cadillac Care’. I don’t know how families who make less than we do can possibly afford childcare. We hope to have a second child, but simply can’t afford it.

– Scott, Albuquerque, NM

NEW YORK

As a mom of three, trying to find work while taking care of my kids has been a struggle. I live in a rural community where there are not many high-quality child care options. Many more families need child care than there are open spots, so most programs have long wait lists. Even if we could find an open spot, there's no way we could afford the extremely high cost.



Child care for just one child can cost as much as rent!

My husband and I have made it work by trying to work around each other's schedules, so that one of us is available to care for the children at all times. I'm grateful we have that option – I know it's even harder for the single parents in my community. Still, it's a huge headache and significantly limits our income. We've gone through so many different iterations of work and care, but it's a puzzle with pieces that never really fit. It's made it difficult to advance in our careers. It's exhausting, and we struggle to make ends meet. We can't always find jobs with schedules that align. For a while now, we've only had one income.

We live practically paycheck to paycheck, trying to keep our family afloat. We work hard, but we barely make enough to pay for our essential living expenses, like healthy groceries, rent, diapers, or the clothing my kids always seem to be outgrowing. Some days, we don't even know how we are going to make it to the next one. That's an enormous amount of stress and sometimes it feels like all we can do is trust in God.

– Jackie, Niagara Falls, NY

NORTH CAROLINA

My son's daycare teachers are probably the most important people in his life outside of family. It stretches our budget to pay for daycare but we make it work. I just find it inexcusable that they are not paid a higher wage.

We need federal and state funding to support early childhood educators – many of whom have college degrees and are experts in a true field of knowledge.

“We’ve gone through so many different iterations of work and care, but it’s a puzzle with pieces that never really fit. It’s made it difficult to advance in our careers. It’s exhausting, and we struggle to make ends meet.”

– Jackie, Niagara Falls, NY

They are shaping our future and deserve our gratitude, respect, and wages that acknowledge the importance of the work they do.

– Katy, Cary, NC

NORTH DAKOTA

I am an Early Childhood professional in Guilford County. Due to inadequate compensation, I cannot afford to send my two year old to school. This is extremely difficult for me since I provide high quality care to other families' children everyday. My child deserves high quality care as well.

– Kristy, Mcleansville, ND

OHIO

Childcare for two children was nearly double our monthly rent. I called to see if we could apply for daycare vouchers through the state. We didn't qualify because we both worked. The caseworker told me that we would

be better off not working. We don't have family who can help, so I started looking for babysitters through care.com.

Because we don't make much money, the only sitters who would accept our hourly wages were honestly pretty scary. One of these potential sitters was so scary that we ran out the door when they went to the backroom to 'get something'. Ultimately my husband quit his job to stay home with the kids which was a huge financial blow to our family. Safe and affordable would have changed our lives.

– Anonymous, Bedford, OH

OKLAHOMA

I receive child care assistance through my local DHS office. If I didn't get this assistance I could not work (even though I live paycheck to paycheck) and would have to apply for Welfare. I'm more than grateful for every penny I receive for child care. Without it I would have to pay \$120/wk!

My daughter is learning so much from the program that is offered: she knows how to count, read (some small sentences) knows her alphabet and she knows how to draw. She is four years old.

– Amanda, Tulsa, OK

I became pregnant with my first child as a senior in college. After graduating and having a small baby I could not find work that paid enough for putting my baby in childcare. It would have cost more for me to have her in childcare then to work.

The first year I stayed home with her while we lived on a very meager budget. My husband is a social worker and did not make a big salary. We were in debt every month.

We are still struggling to not be in debt. It seems like having kids and being in debt go hand in hand. When she was two, I was finally able to find work in my teaching artist field that I could then afford to have her in childcare. The situation was far from ideal.

She was in a rural day care center where I tried to minimize how often she was there. She went in the afternoons only when I was teaching. I then found an in-home care that could take her on an as needed basis. Finding childcare while working part time in the arts was a full-time job.

– Margarite, Tulsa, OK

“As a pediatrician and mother, I see the importance of skilled childcare every day... Stable childcare enables parents to work, providing essentials like food, shelter, and access to medical care. Studies show that supporting parents, including provision of stable childcare, decreases child abuse.”

– Bronwyn, Portland, OR

OREGON

As a pediatrician and mother, I see the importance of skilled childcare every day. I care for children in the hospital injured by lack of adequate supervision or by stressed caregivers inflicting injury, accidental and non-accidental.

Stable childcare enables parents to work, providing essentials like food, shelter, and access to medical care. Studies show that supporting parents, including provision of stable childcare, decreases child abuse. Please help protect children by supporting their families.

– Bronwyn, Portland, OR

Our childcare expenses are more than our mortgage. We pay \$1,355 for our 19 month old and about \$500 for our 6 year old. My husband and I both work full time and it's essential that our children are somewhere safe while we're at work. It's also critical that childcare fit our

“It’s incredible how our economy forces a dual income and then doesn’t provide an affordable and accessible childcare infrastructure. And when it doesn’t work, instead of looking at the system, they look at the parents - as though we have done something wrong.”

– Jodi, Portland, OR

schedules as best as possible, this means no closures for school holidays, opening before 7:30am and not closing until 6pm. It’s incredible how our economy forces a dual income and then doesn’t provide an affordable and accessible childcare infrastructure. And when it doesn’t work, instead of looking at the system, they look at the parents - as though we have done something wrong.

Because of the high cost of our childcare we are unable to pay down our student loans, which total well over \$100k. We have good incomes and we live modestly. We have been thrown into financial insecurity – first because there is no paid leave and second because child care expenses are astronomical. So, we work towards an uncertain future.

– Jodi, Portland, OR

PENNSYLVANIA

I’m a 25-year-old single mom with no child support or family support and I literally cannot afford to work because full time childcare is around \$1200 a month and my rent is 1200 a month so with \$15 an hour full time BEFORE TAXES is 2400. Nobody should EVER not be able to AFFORD to work because child care takes half of your check.

– Elizabeth, Harrisburg, PA

RHODE ISLAND

I work part-time and support my family (my husband is a student), so I need reliable childcare for my two boys, ages 4 years and 7 months. The cost of preschool for our older child, and 3 mornings/week of daycare for our baby, is more than our rent. The cost of childcare is outrageous. We need real government support for working parents.

– Katherine, Providence, RI

SOUTH CAROLINA

Finding affordable quality childcare in my area was so difficult and is the reason that my son is an only child. Even though I got on multiple daycare waiting lists while I was pregnant, it wasn’t until my son was 7 months old when there was an opening at our top pick, the one closest to my workplace, which also ended up being the most expensive. Despite its high cost and NAEYC accreditation, it wasn’t a great experience and we pulled him out after less than six months.

In addition to the baseline high cost of daycare, my son would catch every cold that came through the center, as young children do, and then deal with the inevitable ear infection and subsequent fever that resulted. Because of the fever, he would have to be kept out of daycare, although I still had to pay, and then I would have to miss time from work, and also have to pay for doctor’s appointments and medication - a triple whammy to our household budget. I ended up having to take out a home equity loan to pay off the child care costs that racked up.

**RECENT POLLING SHOWS:
71 PERCENT
OF VOTERS
IN 2022 SWING
STATES, INCLUDING
56% OF REPUBLICANS,
BELIEVE THEIR GOVERNORS SHOULD
EXCEPT THE FUNDING TO EXPAND
THEIR STATE’S CHILD CARE SYSTEMS
IF THE PROPOSAL BECOMES LAW**



Despite having a household with two working college-educated adults, we didn't have enough to make ends meet and had to resort to paying for daycare with a credit card. I was always told that daycare would get less expensive the older my child got. But that ended up not being true b/c the daycare would have a tuition increase every year so the price always stayed the same. And the cost of daycare didn't end when he started public school b/c we just had to pay for after school care.

– Martha, Columbia, SC

SOUTH DAKOTA

We need more investments in early learning. We have parochial, county schools, public schools, government schools, and language schools in our area -- all of which has a severe shortage of teachers' aides and assistants.

– Edward, Oglala, SD

TENNESSEE

My son and daughter-in-law have always struggled with the high cost of quality day care for their family. It takes two in-comes just to pay the bills and the high cost of decent day care is a hardship on their family. Our country only has after school programs for low income and children failing in school. There is no after school enrichment programs in the small counties of Tennessee. I feel our country is doing a disservice to our children by not offering programs that would help them compete with other countries as an adult. We are also doing a disservice to the families of this nation by blaming the parents when a child is failing if we are not willing to support them by providing services that they need as working and contributing members of our society.

– Linda, Chapel Hill, TN

TEXAS

My husband and I make more than double minimum wage. We were surprised with our 3rd baby due in February. Some may say this is our fault for putting ourselves in this situation but as you also know abortion is illegal in Texas. They want us to raise our own but do not make it easy to do so. We're now facing how to pay someone else to raise our kids so that we can work overtime to afford our 3-bedroom home. I want to raise my own babies.

– Brianna, Rockwall, TX

UTAH

My husband and I are middle class with two children under 5. We have delayed buying big ticket items such as a new car and a house (we would be first time home buyers) because we do not feel financially stable. A quarter of our monthly income goes to childcare costs. I do not begrudge our facility for these charges, no one is getting rich (especially the low paid staff) it is just the cost of providing quality childcare. Our childcare providers deserve a living wage.

– Danai, Salt Lake City, UT

VERMONT

I fear I may not recover my career after two kids and a pandemic. I have a PhD. I'm highly educated. Yet not having access to childcare has caused me to stay home and I don't know who will hire me on the other side of this. And the time and energy it takes to regain skills and knowledge that have gone dormant while staying home to care for children feels insurmountable. Women deserve options. We deserve balance. Choosing to have a child should not also mean choosing to end a career.

– Anonymous, Arlington, VT

VIRGINIA

For the last three years, it has been impossible to afford adequate childcare for my son Max. I've had the help of his grandmothers from time to time to assist as well as other family members. I had the opportunity to work a temporary flexible schedule. However, I have not been able to find permanent affordable care for him.



There are a ton of qualified babysitters looking for work, but the pay requirements are not affordable (ranging from \$16-20 per hour). Just as much as a weekly salary. Daycares are not much different and based on Max's current health situation the risk doesn't outweigh the result. So we keep him home and juggle our daily duties with work as best as we can.

– Ivonne, Chesapeake, VA

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Just as much as a weekly salary. Daycares are not much different and based on Max’s current health situation the risk doesn’t outweigh the result.”

– Ivonne, Chesapeake, VA

WASHINGTON

Lack of affordable and accessible child-care has been the number one barrier to my ability to work. My husband was a full-time student when we had our second child three years ago. I loved my job and was excited to return to work. However, I could never get the math to add up. I have countless pieces of paper trying to figure out how to pay for childcare while still bringing home enough income.

We didn’t qualify for any assistance programs since my husband was a full-time student and not also working at the same time. As we were a one-income household if I worked full-time my income would put us over the threshold for public assistance.

Furthermore, I would have to pay for full-time childcare for two children. Working full time meant less take home pay. I was fortunate to have a flexible employer who let me work part-time. However, 80-90% of my income went



ACCORDING TO A NEW GOLDMAN SACHS SURVEY:

55 PERCENT
OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS
SAID THEY OR THEIR EMPLOYEES
ARE STRUGGLING WITH
CHILD CARE CHALLENGES

<https://www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000-small-business-es/US/voices/policy-agenda/pandemic-to-prosperity.html>

towards childcare and my family lived off of student loans to make ends meet.

Fast forward one year and I was totally out of the workforce due to the pandemic. Fast forward two years and I have had to leave my full-time job due to childcare gaps and lack of understanding and flexibility from my employer.

All of my friends are facing similar situations. Many people tend to internalize the childcare crisis thinking it is a personal failure. It is not. We need new infrastructure and flexible employers. The math will never add up until we have subsidized childcare. Our care providers deserve to be paid fairly too.

– Anonymous, Ruston, WA

WEST VIRGINIA

Like most West Virginians, I live in a child care desert. I qualify for state-subsidized care, but until recently, I couldn’t actually find a spot in a program. There’s only one licensed child care program in my area, and as you can imagine, the waitlist is extensive. My two-year-old had been on that waitlist since she was born, and only qualified for a spot 2 months after her second birthday.

For a while, I paid a babysitter hundreds of dollars a month to watch my youngest while I worked. But that babysitter got a new job. Until she qualified for a daycare spot, I was trying to work remotely and care for my two-year-old at the same time, often logging into work after



**“I used to run an
in-home child care
program, and I know the
pandemic has been a
crisis on top of a crisis
for child care providers.”**

– Meghan, Marlinton, WV

she went to bed at night.. Let me tell you: That’s just not realistic or sustainable. I used to run an in-home child care program, and I know the pandemic has been a crisis on top of a crisis for child care providers. The pandemic has driven up costs and made the shortages even worse. So many child care providers have closed permanently, leaving even more parents without any options if they need to keep their jobs.

– Meghan, Marlinton, WV

WISCONSIN

I left a good job because the stress was too much without being able to afford childcare. Now my fiance works and I stay home with the children, I want to go back to school but I don’t know if I’ll have enough money to pay for childcare to do so.

– Mildrea, Milwaukee, WI

WYOMING

Working in early childhood education I have first-hand experience with young parents who try to do the best for their children. When a parent earns minimum wage and has long hours, a good day care center with well qualified professional staff who earns a livable wage and can offer counseling and child rearing advice means all the difference to these fragile families.

Here in Wyoming, money is being spent on a new jail, remodeling and enlarging the senior center, but the day care center struggles along with bake sales, bazaars, and raffles for needed funds. Parents struggle to pay all the fees themselves. There is a huge waiting list. The staff barely earns minimum wage and must rely on their other family members for living expenses in their own homes. Numerous studies have shown that early enrichment and care and guidance for the young child and his/her parents show great dividends in family stability, higher test scores and mental health.

– Joanna, Buffalo, WY

**To learn more about our stories or to contact our staff,
please contact our Senior Campaign Director
S. Nadia Hussain, at nadia@momsrising.org**

MomsRising.org is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.

MomsRising is working for paid family leave, flexible work options, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many others. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, and breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start.

Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America's families. In 2013, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row and Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its "Best of the Net" list.