



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WASHINGTON'S CHILD CARE COSTS ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN THE NATION,
ACCORDING TO CHILD CARE AWARE OF AMERICA'S ANNUAL HIGH COST OF CHILD CARE REPORT**

TACOMA, WA – Dec. 8, 2015 – Washington **ranks 6th** in the nation for least affordable child care for infants, and 10th for care of a four-year-old child, according to Child Care Aware of America's new Parents and the High Cost of Child Care 2015 Report, released today. The report shows that child care continues to often be a Washington family's second biggest expense after housing.

In Washington, the new report reveals it is often more expensive to have an infant in child care than it is to pay for a year of college tuition, and that for some families, particularly single-parent families, child care expenses amount to more than what is spent on housing or on food.

"Child Care Aware of Washington connects thousands of children and families to the child care programs they need in order for parents to be able to be in the workforce. What we hear from families is that affording high-quality child care is a major challenge," said Robin Lester, Chief Executive Officer of CCA of Washington, a member of Child Care Aware of America.

The new report reveals that the average, annualized cost for an infant in center-based care accounts for almost 15% of the state median income for married couples, and over 49% of the state median income for single parents. For preschool-age care, the average cost in Washington is more than 11% of the state median income for married couples and over 37% for single parents. The report's ranking is not based on cost, but on affordability based upon average cost compared with median incomes.

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Compared to poverty levels, the costs of child care become even more daunting. Washington families with incomes at the federal poverty level of \$19,790 for a family of three spend an average of 47.7% of their income to care for a four-year-old child at a child care center and 38.8% at a family child care home.

Child care is generally more expensive in places with higher median household income and overall cost of living, often in urban areas. This year the annual Parents and the High Cost of Child Care report highlights data in King County and four other major counties nationwide. On average, the cost of center-based care for an infant in King County is 31% higher than in the rest of the state. The report notes that the median family income in King County is about 22% greater than the state average, indicating that despite having higher income, families in the county are paying disproportionately higher rates for child care. Care for a four-year-old child in the county is 25% higher than state average. The high cost burden is somewhat offset by higher state child care subsidy payments in King County.

Overall, WA ranks 8th for least affordable child care for single-parent families, and 28th for least affordable child care for school-age children.

The statewide average annual cost for an infant in a child care center in 2014 was \$12,733, and \$9,466 in a family child care program. Care for a four-year-old child in 2014 in a center cost an annual average of \$9,588, and in a family child care program that care cost \$7,801.

There are 5,793 child care providers in Washington State with capacity for 166,834 children as of June 2015. Almost half of all child care programs are participating in Early Achievers, Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System.¹ Child Care Aware of Washington tracks child care costs in every county in our state. Our reports are available here <http://www.childcarenet.org/about-us/data/>.

A full copy of the Parents and the High Cost of Child Care 2015 Report can be found here:

<http://wa.childcareaware.org/news>.

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Child Care Aware of Washington is a non-profit, 501 © (3) organization dedicated to connecting families to high-quality, licensed child care and early learning programs across the state, and to supporting providers who deliver high-quality care. As a statewide network of six regional agencies, we work side-by-side with child care providers, offering professional development services and higher education scholarships to help them integrate research-based, best practices into their programs. We are committed to ensuring that each and every child in Washington has access to the quality care and education they need to succeed in school and life. For more information, please visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org> and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/> and on Twitter @childcarewa.

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 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 and on Facebook at [facebook.com/usachildcare](https://www.facebook.com/usachildcare).

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Sources:

(1) Child Care Aware of Washington Statewide Data Report, Aug. 2015, Karen Sampson, <http://wa.childcareaware.org/about-us/data>