



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 2016 PARENTS AND THE HIGH COST OF CHILD CARE REPORT

TACOMA, WA – Dec. 8, 2016 – Washington ranks 6th in the nation for least affordable child care for infants in child care centers, and 3rd least affordable for infants in family home child care programs, according to Child Care Aware of America's 2016 Parents and the High Cost of Child Care Report. For preschoolers, WA ranks 7th least affordable for center-based care and 8th for family home child care. This is the 4th year in a row WA has ranked in the top 10 least affordable states for child care.¹

Child care is often a family's second biggest expense after housing. In Washington, the new report shows that the trend of child care costing more than the average annual college tuition continues. Also, WA ranks as the 12th least affordable state for child care for single-parent families, according to the report.

"Child Care Aware of Washington connects thousands of children and families to the child care programs they need in order for parents 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 at Child Care Aware of Washington, an affiliate of Child Care Aware of America.

The new report reveals that the average, annualized cost for an infant in center-based care accounts for 14.5% of the state median income for married couples, and 50.3% of the state median income for single

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mothers. When infants are cared for in family home child care programs, the percentage of a married couple's annualized median income spent on child care is 10.8%, and for single mothers the percentage is 37.4%.

For center-based care of a 4-year-old, the average cost in WA is 11% of married couple's annual median income and 38% of a single mother's income. When 4-year-olds are cared for in family home child care programs, the percentages are 9.2% for married couples and 31.8% for single mothers. **The report's ranking is not based on cost, but on affordability based upon average cost compared with state median incomes.**

Child Care Aware of Washington tracks child care supply, demand and costs statewide and in **every county** in our state. For example, in **King County** our data show the median cost for center-based care for infants is 23% of median household income, and 15% at family home child cares. For preschool-age care, those percentages are 17% and 12% respectively. In **Yakima County**, the percentages are 20% of state median income for married couples for center-based care of an infant, and 17% for infant care in a family home child care. In **Spokane County** the percentages are 20% and 15% respectively. Our data reports are available here <http://www.childcarenet.org/about-us/data/>.

Overall, there are 5,617 licensed child care providers in WA with capacity for 165,404 children as of June 2016.² Approximately 71% are participating in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care programs. CCA of WA works side-by-side with child care providers, helping them reach their quality improvement goals and improve their service to WA's children and families. To learn more about Early Achievers, visit <http://wa.childcareaware.org/providers/early-achievers>.

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Child Care Aware of Washington is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to connecting families to high-quality, licensed child care and early learning programs across the state. We also provide scholarships to early learning professionals. We are committed to ensuring that each and every child in Washington has access to the high-quality child care and early learning they need to succeed in school and life. For more information, please visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org>.

Child Care Aware® of America is our nation's leading voice for child care. CCA of America works with state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and other community partners to help ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable child care. CCA of America 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 www.usa.childcareaware.org. Follow them on Twitter [@USACHildCare](https://twitter.com/USACHildCare) and on Facebook at facebook.com/usachildcare.

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Sources and Notes:

¹ Child Care Aware of America does not include Colorado in its 2016 Parents and the High Cost of Child Care Report. It does include CO and Washington, D.C. in the report's accompanying appendices.

² Child Care Aware of Washington 2016 Statewide Data Report, Oct. 2016, <http://wa.childcareaware.org/about-us/data>