

## **New Report Finds Child Care Costs Continue to Rise Quality child care is becoming increasingly difficult to afford for working families**

Arlington, VA - According to a report released by Child Care Aware® of America, the cost of child care continues to increase while families struggle to afford quality care. Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2014 Report provides results from a survey of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) State Networks and local agencies, which asked for the average fees charged by child care programs in 2013.

The report provides the average cost of child care in 2013 for infants, 4-year-olds, and school-age children in centers and family child care homes nationwide. It shows that in 31 states (including the District of Columbia), the average annual cost for center-based care for an infant was higher than a year's in-state tuition and related fees at a four-year public college. In every state and the District of Columbia, center-based child care costs for two children (an infant and a 4-year-old) exceeded annual average rent payments.

In Virginia, the average annual cost of center-based infant care in 2013 was 10,028. The average annual cost of center-based care for a 4 year-old was about \$7,700. The average annual cost of infant care in a family child care home was \$8,272. The average annual cost of care for a 4-year-old in a family child care home was \$6,656.

"Families need child care in order to work," said Sharon Veatch, Executive Director of Child Care Aware of Virginia. "But, child care today is simply unaffordable for too many families. It's particularly tough for families with more than one young child."

According to the report, in 2013, the average annual cost of full-time child care for an infant in a center ranged from about \$5,496 in Mississippi to \$16,549 in Massachusetts. The average annual cost of full-time care for a 4-year-old child in a center ranged from \$4,515 in Tennessee to \$12,320 in Massachusetts. In New York, parents of school-age children paid \$11,352 a year for part-time before and after-school care in a center. "In Virginia, center-based infant care costs about \$338 less per year than the annual cost of college tuition and fees. That's roughly the same for any parent's checkbook," said Veatch.

"Last week a report was released about the low wages of child care workers," said Veatch. "On average, center-based child care workers earn about \$10.33 per hour. This means that those who work with young children earn barely above the poverty level, but combined with today's report about the prices parents pay, parents already struggle with the cost of child care. They can't pay more. Clearly, the system isn't working - for either those employed in the child care industry or parents who depend on child care to work."

"It is time to engage in a nationwide discussion about alternative financing mechanisms for high quality child care," said Veatch. "Child care affordability affects all families, it's not only a challenge for low income families. What we have is a system that is underfinanced which results in poor pay for the important work of caring for young children during their most formative years and costs that are a struggle for parents."

"Working parents depend on child care. Children depend on child care for a safe setting that promotes their healthy development. It is time for federal and state policymakers to look at alternative financing to support a system that works for all families. The current system does not," said Veatch.

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To download a copy of Child Care Aware of America's report *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2014 Report*, please visit <http://usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>.

To download a copy of the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment's report, please visit <http://www.irl.berkeley.edu/csce/2014/report-worthy-work-still-unlivable-wages/>.

To view maps of child care facilities in Virginia, please visit <http://va.childcareaware.org/virginia-child-care-programs/>