

## SNAPSHOT

# CHILD CARE AND THE U.S. ECONOMY



### Child care is a key support for the U.S. workforce.



**19%** of adults in the U.S. have young children.

That's approximately **24.4 million** people.

### Child care is necessary for single parents to work.



**28%** of U.S. mothers with young children and

**16%** of U.S. fathers with young children are single parents.

### Young parenthood boosts men's workforce participation but lessens women's workforce participation.



**70%** of U.S. women with young children and **81%** of U.S. women with no minor children participate in the labor force.

Corresponding figures are **95%** and **86%**, respectively, for U.S. men.



### High child care costs challenge families with young children.



**\$9,200**  
per child per year  
on average

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**10%** of median  
income for U.S.  
households with a  
young child

### Despite high care costs, child care workers earn less than the typical U.S. worker.



The **median hourly wage** of a U.S. child care worker is

**\$14.60**, and the **median for all workers** is **\$23.11**.

NOTES: Statistics are based on prime-age civilian adults ages 25 to 54. Adults are considered parents when a biological child, stepchild or adopted child under 18 is living with them. Young children are defined as ages 0 to 5. Single is defined as separated, divorced, widowed or never married. Average cost is rounded to the nearest hundred. Wage statistics include all full-time workers in a category, regardless of age. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' definition of affordable child care is no more than 7% of household income. Statistics on child care costs and worker wages are based on center-based care and omit subsidies. See Moosavian (2021) for the effect of parenthood on labor force participation.

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey via IPUMS CPS (2023-24), U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey via IPUMS USA (2021-23), Child Care Technical Assistance Network, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (2023).



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