MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM

The Role of Child Care Investments in Supporting Working Families

The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (LPIC) conducted its annual survey of Louisiana parents and guardians with children under the age of 5 in the fall of 2022 in partnership with Agenda for Children, the Louisiana Department of Education, and Women United of Southeast Louisiana. The survey focused on the child care arrangements of surveyed families, including their needs and experiences related to child care.

Year-over-year, Louisiana families with young children rely on child care to support parent employment and education.

- **Most responding parents** were working or attending school, full time and outside of the home.
  - The unemployment rate was **three times as high** for parents with a family income below $20,000 per year.
- Families with young children relied **heavily on some type of formal child care outside the home.**
- **Over 80%** of parents reported utilizing child care for 30 or more hours per week, with children in child care for an average of **38 hours per week.**

- Parents indicated the **main reasons for using their current child care arrangements were hours/availability, child interactions with others, supporting kindergarten readiness, and convenient location.**
- **Over half** of parents made some sort of adjustment to their work or school schedule to provide child care in the previous six months.
  - Parents with a family income below $20,000 per year were almost **twice as likely** to have quit their job in order to care for their children.

Child care costs continue to rise, especially for families paying the entire cost of care.

- On average, families in Louisiana reported currently paying **$348 per child per month** for child care — for a family with two children, that would translate to **$8,341 per year.**
  - For families paying for child care and **not receiving any type of subsidized care**, the average monthly cost of child care was **$709 per child per month**, or **$17,023 per year** for a family with two children.
  - For families **receiving some sort of subsidized child care** but still having to pay some amount, the average monthly cost of child care was **$433 per child per month**, or **$10,395 per year** for a family with two children.
- **Over 50%** of families received some type of subsidized child care in 2022, either through enrollment in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and/or a free child care program.

Working families benefit from increased supports, and any reductions will have a greater impact on those who are struggling the most.

- **Almost half** of parents were concerned about being unable to afford child care.
  - Parents with family incomes between $35,000 and $100,000 per year were **more likely** to be concerned about their inability to afford child care.
- **Over 50%** of parents indicated having trouble paying for basic household expenses, including utilities, child care, food, and clothing, in the prior six months.
- **Nearly half** of parents claimed or planned to claim School Readiness Tax Credits for Child Care Expenses on their 2021 Louisiana tax return.

Child care challenges persist for working families.

- **Over one-fifth** of parents said it was difficult to find their current child care arrangements.

- **Nearly 75%** of parents reported having to take at least one day off from work in the prior three months because of a child care closure.
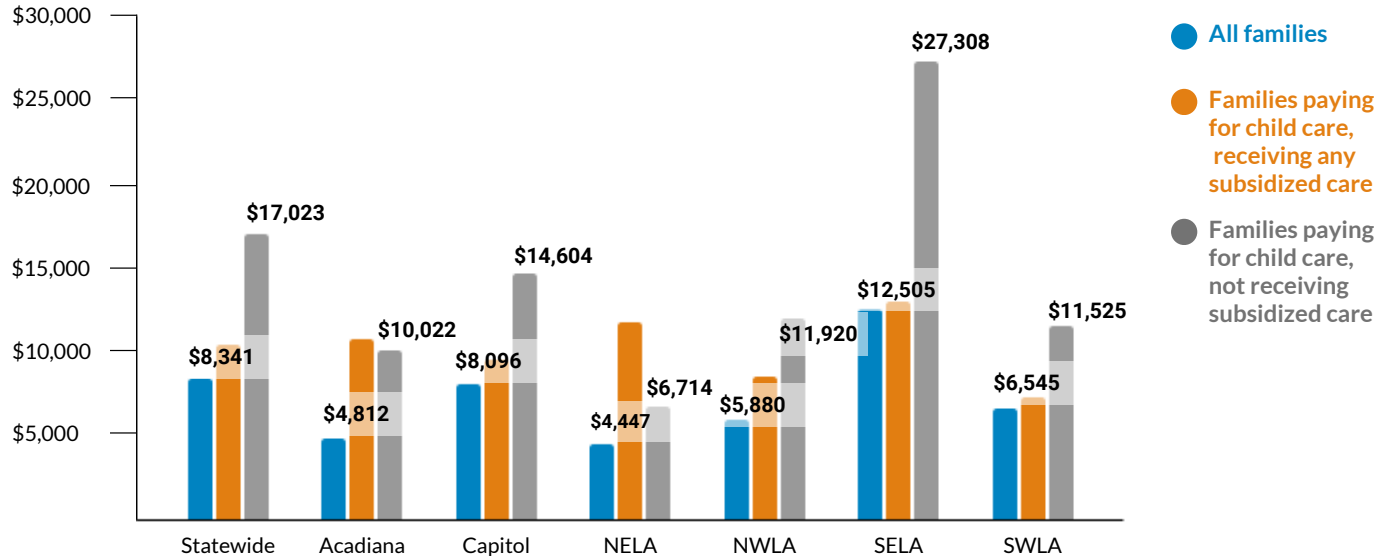
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Average Annual Cost of Child Care for Family with Two Children

- **All families**
- **Families paying for child care, receiving any subsidized care**
- Families paying for child care, not receiving subsidized care

Question: How much do you pay for your current child care arrangement(s) per week? Please provide the typical dollar amount you pay per week for ALL of your children under age 5. If you pay a monthly rate, please divide the monthly rate by 4.
Note: Results for "families paying for child care, receiving any subsidized care" only include respondents paying at least $1 and who indicated they are receiving at least one type of subsidized care. Results for "families paying for child care, not receiving subsidized care" only include respondents paying at least $1 and who indicated they are not receiving subsidized care.

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE CHILD CARE HELPS US ALL

High-quality early care and education benefits everyone in Louisiana. From children preparing for success in school and life to employers having a reliable workforce with minimal interruptions. For the state to maintain its momentum, Louisiana must:

- **Continue state investments in early care and education** to increase access to high-quality child care, especially for children birth through age 3, including funding for programs that received one-time federal stopgap investments.

- **Encourage local governments to generate revenue for early care and education** through continued state investment in the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund.

- **Support continued professionalization of the early care and education workforce** through compensation and training strategies implemented by the Louisiana Department of Education and Louisiana Workforce Commission.

- **Encourage increased federal investments in early care and education** to support increased access to affordable child care for working families.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

LPIC developed and administered the Louisiana Child Care Parent Poll survey online through Survey Monkey from October 19, 2022, through November 2, 2022. Prospective respondents included any parent or guardian in Louisiana with at least one child under the age of 5 living in their home. Within the survey window, 3,005 responded to the survey, answering some or all of the survey questions.

For questions where some survey respondents did not provide an answer, the included results percentages reflect calculations based only on the number of survey respondents providing an answer to the question. For example, if only 100 survey respondents answered a question, the results would reflect what percentage of those 100 respondents selected each answer.

For more information, visit policyinstitutela.org.