

THE PARADOX FACING WORKING MOTHERS IN LOUISIANA

Fact Sheet Developed by Louisiana Policy Institute for Children

Background

In Louisiana, nearly 30,000 low-income mothers with children under age three are currently in the workforce, but struggle to access affordable, reliable, quality early care and education while they work.

Child care can cost \$7,500 per year in Louisiana—almost as much as public college tuition.

For a low-income single mother with an infant, \$7,500 per year represents 44% of her annual income.



A low-income married couple with two young children spends 58% of their combined annual income on child care and education.



The Impact on Families & Businesses

Without child care assistance:

- **Almost 80% of low-income working families** report struggling to find quality, affordable child care.
- **Two-thirds of these working families** are borrowing money to pay for care for their children.



- **Over half of these working families are sacrificing basic household necessities** like food, clothing, and utilities to cover the costs of child care.

One in 13 working parents with young children was fired from their place of employment due to challenges with child care.

Almost half of working mothers with young children in Louisiana miss work regularly due to child care issues.



Nearly 14% of working parents with young children, including 12% of working mothers, turned down a promotion due to child care issues.

Absences and turnover due to child care issues cost Louisiana employers **\$816 million a year**, and result in a **\$1.1 billion loss annually for Louisiana's economy**.

Potential Opportunities

The return-on-investment in quality early care and education can reach **13% per year**.

Early experiences for young children are foundational, with 90% of brain development taking place from birth through age 4. Studies show quality early care and education programs support better learning, social behavior, and health outcomes for children.

Sources:

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014 through 2018.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2017.
- Louisiana Department of Education, Early Childhood Care and Education Annual Report, 2018.
- Child Care Aware of America, The US and the High Price of Child Care, 2019.
- Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, Losing Ground: How Child Care Impacts Louisiana's Workforce Productivity and the State Economy, 2017.
- National Bureau of Economic Research, Quantifying the Life-Cycle Benefits of a Prototypical Early Childhood Program, 2017.
- Harvard Graduate School of Education, The Lasting Payoff of Early Ed, 2017.
- The Heckman Equation, The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program, 2017.

Access to reliable child care and education results in **better outcomes for mothers' employment**.

Quality early care and education is not babysitting. Quality early care and education programs are led by teaching professionals who use age-appropriate learning materials and curriculum in their classrooms. Early care and education programs and professionals support positive interpersonal interactions and foster a safe and secure learning environment. Ensuring children can receive continuity of care in quality settings maximizes long-term benefits for children.

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