

Child Care: 'Cost of Care' Report: Losses for Low-Income Families

The Michigan 4C Association (MI4C) collected child care cost data from the child care provider databases of the 16 regional 4C offices on the average cost of child care. The annual "**Cost of Care**" report, available at the Michigan 4C Association website www.mi4c.org, shows that parents spend an average of \$6,519 per year per child for child care in Michigan.

The cost of care varies widely depending on the county, the age of the child and the type of setting a parent chooses (center, family child care or group family child care home). A parent who uses a center for infant care pays an average of **\$8,955** per year.

Parents needing infant care in a center in Washtenaw County pay the most: an average of \$225/wk. or \$11,700 per year. Parents who need infant care in a center in Osceola County pay the least: an average of \$97 per week. Michigan parents pay more for infant care in a center than parents pay for a year of tuition at a Michigan state college.

Parents must devote a significant portion of their incomes to pay for child care. A single parent who earns \$22,247 (median income for a female single parent) must spend 29% of her income on child care.

Low-income families can receive financial assistance from the Michigan Department of Human Services to help pay for child care. In reality, low-income parents who are eligible for financial support must make up the difference between the cost of care and the child care subsidy as the child care subsidy pays for less than the average cost of child care.

MI4C operates a toll-free number, 1-866-4CHILD CARE (1-866-424-4532) for anyone who wants information about licensed or registered child care homes and centers, or has other questions about child care.

The mission of the Michigan 4C Association is to foster children's success and development through service to the early childhood care and education community so that all children are successful in school and in life.

Thanks to Bob Parks at School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan for this analysis.