
Introduction and Testimonials

Introduction

Beyond the generally high cost of childcare in Seattle, there are a few things to be taken into account that directly apply to the lives of residents and fellows. Residents match in March. They have three months to shift their lives to Seattle, a process that becomes more complicated when it involves children. I have yet to come across a daycare facility that doesn't have a waitlist; most facilities I toured before my daughter was born quoted a 1-2 year wait from the time I applied. If you applied to every daycare on the day you match, or the day you find out you're pregnant, you still may not have care-- let alone the care of your choosing-- by the time you need it. The alternative to care in a facility is a nanny, which most families can't afford to pay for alone. The oft-proposed solution for this problem is a nanny share: one nanny employed by two families who share the cost. Here, residents are at a disadvantage again. Being transient, they don't often have the social connections in place to line up this type of care.

If you are fortunate enough, as I was, to luck into an empty slot at a daycare center (in my case, a child in my daughter's age group was moving out of town), the question then becomes "how do we pay for this?" Let's take my daughter's daycare as an example, which charges an average fee compared to many other Seattle daycare providers, based on the extensive research I did while pregnant. They charge \$2100 a month for infant care-- which amounts to paying a second rent. Now say you have two children who aren't yet in school. Their combined fee at our daycare would cost a family \$39,080.00 per year. If you're the spouse of a physician in training, you'd have to have a pretty high-earning job to be able to afford childcare for one child, and for more than one it's next to impossible. Since physicians-in-training can't quit their jobs without essentially ending their careers, that burden falls on the partner. Now try to imagine a family of four in Seattle, trying to afford a 2-bedroom apartment and groceries, solely on the salary you pay your residents.

Because of the years of invested time it takes to become a fully licensed physician, many doctors start their families during the training years. If they didn't, some wouldn't be able to have children at all. The high cost of living in Seattle, and in particular the high cost of childcare, puts a huge strain on families and in some cases deters potential candidates from ranking this program high. In our case, the existence of the union was the deciding factor in ranking UW #1. But trying to afford life in Seattle hasn't been a picnic even with the union's support.

- Dana Hermelin, spouse of former resident

Testimonials

"The high cost of housing and daycare are a huge burden to us (\$2000 a month for daycare compare to about \$800 in other cities). Currently I pay about \$3900 for the house which is higher than my salary. My husband is a nurse at VA. With his salary, we can barely support the family with 3 kids and my mother-in-law stays at home to take care of the baby."

“I am due in 9 days with our first. My biggest concern is with FINDING childcare. The UW childcare waitlist estimated 1-3 years. We told them the day I had a positive pregnancy test. We get priority at Bright Horizons, the most expensive child care in the city by far. Beyond that, no help. I’m on 10 waitlists and have no idea when I will have childcare actually lined up.”

“[My coresident] was told by her attending that she wasn’t cut out to be both a mother and a resident.”

“I burned all of my sick days and vacation to have [maternity leave]. I went back sooner than I was recovered and it was a mess because I didn’t have a nanny and wasn’t focused.”

By the Numbers

Cost of Childcare

| Childcare Centers (with locations central to UW affiliated hospitals) | Full Time Infant Tuition - Monthly |
|---|------------------------------------|
| MightyKidz | \$2100.00 |
| Cosmopolitan Kids | \$2100.00 |
| Bright Horizons | \$2530.00 |
| Pike Market Child Care | \$1800.00 |
| Northwest Kids | \$2050.00 |
| Green Tree | \$2168.00 |
| UW (West Campus) | \$2015.00 |
| UW (Portage Bay) | \$1980.00 |
| Harborview | \$1827.00 |
| Hutch Kids | \$2405.00 |
| Young Child Academy | \$2058.00 |
| Wallingford Child Care | \$2280.00 |
| Average: | \$2109.42 |

Please note that legally, **children cannot spend more than ten hours per day in child care centers (WAC 110-300A-2020)**. For two-resident families, this essentially bars the use of center-based care and forces them to employ a nanny or take part in a nanny share.

Average hourly pay for a nanny in Seattle, for the care of one child: \$17.49 (1)

Monthly cost for ~22 days; 8-12 hours per day: \$3078.24 - \$4617.36

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, childcare is only affordable if it costs less than 10% of salary (2).

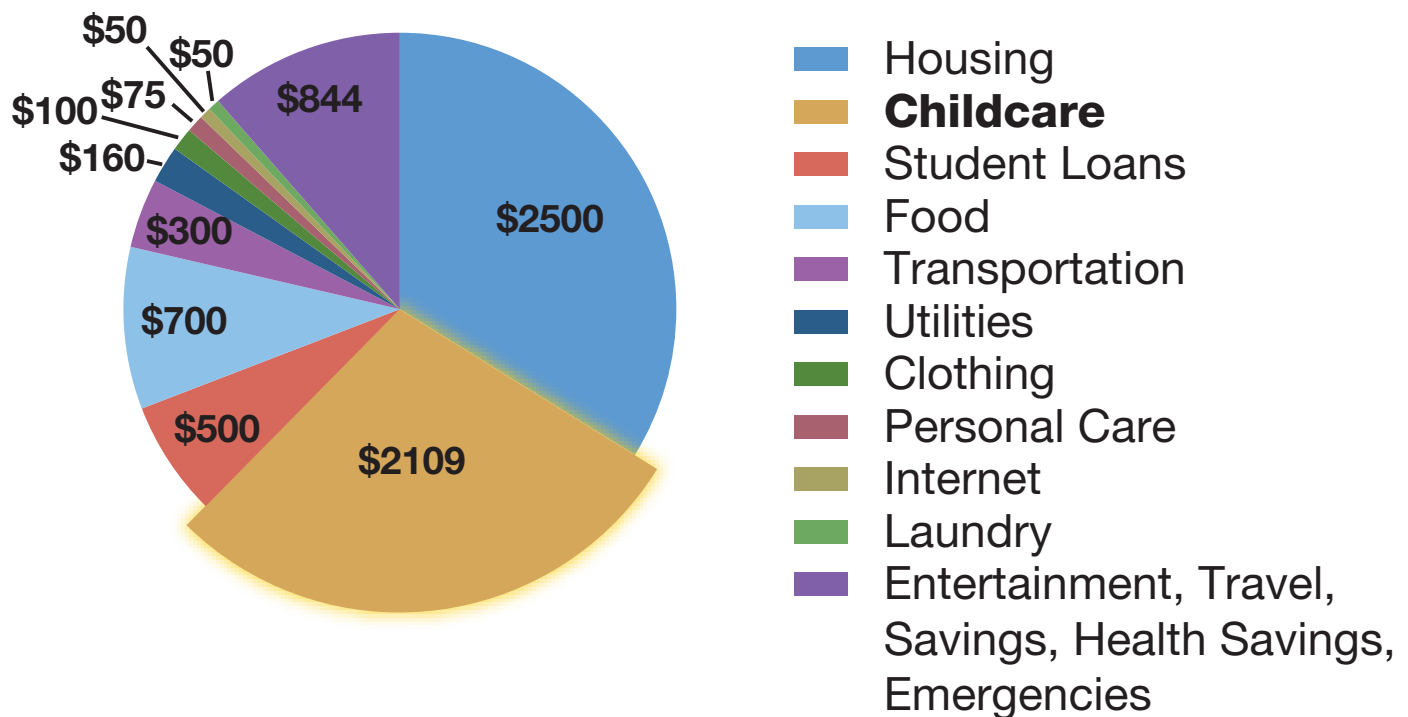
The average cost of childcare for one child in the Seattle area is 42% of a PGY-1 resident salary.

Childcare and average rent in Seattle represent almost 100% of a PGY-1 resident salary.

1) Careworks NW <https://www.careworksnw.com/nanny-share-seattle/>

2) Economic Policy Institute <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/WA>

Example Monthly Cost Graph



Access to Childcare

From 2012 to 2016, the number of daycare providers in King county has decreased from 2,211 to 1,903 (3). In the same period, the capacity of these centers increased from 58,540 to 62,113 or 3,573 children (3).

From 2012 to 2016, King County's population grew an estimated 147,000 far outstripping demand (4).

As of our February Information Request, UW's childcare centers with preferred access (and proximity to affiliated hospitals) had 929 children on their combined wait lists. As of the last provided wait list report, 29 new children had been enrolled. **This is an enrollment rate of 3.1%.** (When Dana's husband completed residency, their daughter was still on the waitlist for UW's West Campus child care center. **It had been two and a half years.**)

In AY19, based on data from UW and UWHA approximately 240 residents had children. If we conservatively estimate that 240 residents have a single child, the average disbursement with the current fund level would provide for **less than 14 hours of nanny care or 2 days of daycare per year.**

Increase the resident childcare fund (RCF) from its current \$50,000 to \$506,160. This will provide

Summary of Proposed Changes

approximately one month of childcare per year for each resident family with children.

Expand emergency childcare services, creating a separate fund of \$50,371. Trainees would apply for reimbursement from this fund when they've had to pay for emergency services (similar to how the Safe Ride Home program works).

3) ChildCare WA <https://childcareawarewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2017-county-data-report-king.pdf>

4) Census.gov King County population estimates