



# The Economics of Caregiving for Working Mothers

Although Overwhelmingly Employed in Caregiving Industries, Women Cannot Afford Child Care

---

By Sarah Jane Glynn and Katie Hamm     December 2019



# The Economics of Caregiving for Working Mothers

Although Overwhelmingly Employed in Caregiving  
Industries, Women Cannot Afford Child Care

---

By Sarah Jane Glynn and Katie Hamm    December 2019

# Contents

- 1 Introduction and summary**
- 4 Child care's outside influence on the lives of women**
- 11 The staggering expense of child care**
- 15 Policy implications**
- 17 Conclusion**
- 18 About the authors and acknowledgments**
- 19 Appendix 1**
- 34 Appendix 2**
- 36 Endnotes**

# Introduction and summary

***Authors' note:** CAP uses “Black” and “African American” interchangeably throughout many of our products. We chose to capitalize “Black” in order to reflect that we are discussing a group of people and to be consistent with the capitalization of “African American.” For the other demographic groups considered in this report, the authors defer to source language where applicable.*

All across the nation—regardless of region and across a diversity of family types, racial and ethnic groups, and ages of children—mothers are driving forces of the American economy. Virtually all of the economic gains experienced by the typical middle-class family since 1970, for example, have been due to increases in women’s earnings.<sup>1</sup> From 1970 to 2013, women’s increased labor force participation and increased earnings grew the U.S. economy by 13.5 percent, which translates into an additional \$2 trillion in economic activity.<sup>2</sup> Women, and mothers in particular, make up a significant proportion of the labor force, and their employment and wages are vital to the overall health of the labor market and the U.S. economy.

While the effects are enormous at the macro level of the economy, women’s and mother’s labor force participation and earnings are also vital to the well-being of their individual families. Long gone are the days when the stereotypical working mother was employed part time, after her children were all of school age and she was simply interested in bringing home pocket money to supplement her husband’s earnings. To be clear: This “Leave It to Beaver” cliché was never accurate for wide swaths of the population, including women of color, immigrant women, and working-class women, all of whom have historically been much more likely to work for pay than white middle-class women. But it is even less true today, when 64 percent of mothers are the primary breadwinners or co-breadwinners in their households, meaning that they earn a significant portion of their family’s income.<sup>3</sup> Women of color, and Black women in particular, are especially likely to play this role for their families. More than 8 in 10—84.4 percent—of Black mothers are breadwinners or co-breadwinners, as are 6 in 10—60.3 percent—of Latinx mothers.<sup>4</sup>

But parents of young children—and especially mothers, due to cultural norms and societal expectations—are only able to participate in the labor force when they have access to work-family supports, including child care. The high cost of child care makes this especially difficult for most families. In 2014, a low-income family earning less than \$50,000 per year that made child care payments spent one-third of this income on child care alone.<sup>5</sup> Although the price of child care varies across the country and depending on the type of care being provided, all but the highest-income families spend more than 7 percent of their annual household income on child care; 7 percent is the federal definition of affordability.<sup>6</sup> The result is that often parents find themselves in an impossible bind: needing reliable child care so that they can go to work but not earning enough money to easily afford the care their children need and deserve.

Child care is too often framed as an individual problem left up to parents to solve on their own, rather than as a public good. Parents, and sometimes extended families, are tasked with figuring out how to arrange and pay for child care and generally must do so in the absence of any meaningful public investment to help defray the cost. This approach ignores the important role that child care plays in the economy, particularly the caregiving economy. It devalues caregiving and masks the fact that the economy, and society overall, can only function if people keep going to work, something that can only happen if someone—be it a parent, family member, or paid caregiver—is providing child care.

Working mothers are especially likely to be employed in industries centered around providing critical services and supports in communities. This report explores the employment patterns of working mothers, concentrating on which industries are most likely to employ mothers whose children are young enough to still require access to child care.

Working mothers are most likely to work in elementary and secondary education, within hospital settings, and in food service. These are the jobs that affect the prospects of America's future labor force and the health and well-being of communities, and they enable the employment of other workers by supplementing work that would otherwise need to be done at home, such as preparing food, educating children, and caring for ill or injured people. Yet median wages in these industries do not begin to cover the price of child care tuition at a licensed center or home after taking into account other basic needs. Consider, for example, that the median yearly salary for a K-12 teacher in the United States is around \$41,000.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the annual price of licensed child care is about \$10,000 per child. For food service workers—where Hispanic mothers are overrepresented—the median wage is less than \$15,000 per year,<sup>8</sup> which means that the average licensed child care prices would consume two-thirds of wages.<sup>9</sup>

It is not an exaggeration to argue that American society would not be able to function in its current state without the work being performed in these industries, and a lack of affordable child care options threatens working mothers' ability to continue providing these essential functions. Supporting services that form the backbone of communities across the country and the U.S. economy requires further public investment in child care.

## Women's paid and unpaid labor keeps families afloat

Women working for pay earn more than \$5 trillion per year, contributing enormously to U.S. economic growth.<sup>10</sup> Women's paid labor accounts for \$7.6 trillion toward U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) on an annual basis, and if every working woman in America went on strike for just one day, it would cost GDP nearly \$21 billion.<sup>11</sup> But paid labor is not the only way that women and mothers contribute to the economy; they also perform significant unpaid labor that fosters the health and well-being of their families. Although the provision of unpaid labor within the home has become more gender equitable over time, women and mothers continue to do the majority of unpaid domestic work for their families, including caring for children. Women are significantly more likely to engage in household labor, caregiving, and chores than men, and they spend more time doing so.<sup>12</sup> This unpaid labor, while not calculated in most traditional levels of economic output, is vital to the overall functioning of the economy—not to mention day-to-day family life.

But the reality is that most mothers, including mothers of very young children, work for pay in addition to performing unpaid labor

within their homes. While mothers are less likely to be members of the labor force than fathers, their participation rates have increased dramatically since the 1970s. In 2018, 71.5 percent of mothers were members of the labor force, which includes 65.1 percent of mothers with children under age 6.<sup>13</sup> In 1975, by contrast, only 47 percent of mothers were in the labor force, including 39 percent of mothers with children under age 6.<sup>14</sup> The majority of mothers work across all races and ethnicities, but it is especially true of Black women, who have the highest rates of maternal labor force participation.<sup>15</sup>

Labor force participation rates, however, do not capture the experiences of women who have left the labor force in order to provide unpaid family care, including child care. Many of these mothers report that they would return to the labor force if only they had access to affordable, quality child care. For example, just more than half of parents who identified as "homemakers" said that they would "look for a job" if they had child care options that were more affordable.<sup>16</sup> Much of this is because child care costs are out of reach for most families.

# Child care's outsized influence on the lives of women

Child care responsibilities—whether performed as unpaid labor or the finding and arrangement of paid child care—are a form of household labor that falls disproportionately on mothers, and has a far more pronounced influence on their wages and employment than those of fathers. While child care responsibilities should be shared among all adult family members, the disparate impact on women and women's labor force participation warrants consideration of how access to child care can improve women's lives and of the impact that high child care costs have on women's wages. Previous child care-related research has emphasized the impacts on maternal labor force participation, employment, and wages.<sup>17</sup> This report focuses on the industries in which mothers are more likely to be employed in order to provide a clearer understanding of which industries are most affected by a lack of public investment in child care—and which industries would likely benefit from such investments.

---

## Maternal employment by industry

While the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey categorizes jobs into more than 250 industry categories, nationwide, approximately 1 out of every 4 working mothers is employed in one of just three industries: elementary and secondary education, hospitals, and food service. This pattern is consistent across nearly all races and ethnicities. (see Table 1)

A full 1 in 10 working mothers with a child under age 13 are employed in elementary and secondary education, with work in hospitals and within food services following closely behind.<sup>18</sup> Across all racial and ethnic groups, somewhere from roughly one-fifth to one-quarter of working mothers with young children work in these three industries.<sup>19</sup>

TABLE 1

## Roughly 1 in 4 working mothers is employed in one of just three industries

Number and share of mothers employed by most popular industry, overall and by race/ethnicity

Industry name	Overall		White		Black or African American		American Indian/ Alaska Native		Hispanic		Asian American/ Pacific Islander	
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share
Elementary and secondary schools	1,984,000	10%	1,621,000	12%	194,000	7%	14,000	9%	276,000	7%	57,000	5%
Hospitals	1,593,000	8%	1,115,000	8%	248,000	8%	10,000	6%	195,000	5%	135,000	11%
Food services	1,293,000	7%	843,000	6%	198,000	7%	12,000	7%	399,000	10%	69,000	6%

Note: The data reflect the number and percentage of mothers with children under age 13. The pattern in this table is similar for mothers of children under age 5. Text highlighted in red represent the most common industry for working mothers within each group.

Source: CAP analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

These industries reflect the backbone of U.S. communities, providing care and education as vital services. These are industries that are known for employing mostly women, and they are also industries that either pay low wages, have significant gender wage gaps, or both. They also require hours and schedules that are not necessarily conducive to traditional child care operating schedules. Food services and hospitals in particular are known as industries in which working long hours late into the night or overnight are not uncommon, and finding child care arrangements to accommodate these types of work hours can be challenging at best. Finding child care for nontraditional hours of care often includes patching together multiple arrangements from one's social network, since traditional child care programs are generally closed and/or charge a premium in tuition costs.

### Elementary and secondary education

Nearly 2 million working mothers, or 10 percent of working mothers with a child under age 13, are employed in elementary and secondary education. (see Table 1) Overall, elementary and secondary education is the most common industry for working mothers, and at first glance, some may assume that this is due to the perception that teachers and other school employees have flexibility in their schedules and that they do not need access to child care because their workdays end early and they have school vacations and summers "off" from work. However common these views may be, they do not necessarily reflect the reality for most working parents in the education system.



First, about 776,000 teachers, or close to 40 percent of mothers working in elementary and secondary schools, have children under age 5.<sup>20</sup> Teachers who are parents of young children, because they are more likely to be young themselves, are even more likely to be on the lower end of the earnings distribution for the profession. Teachers also work much longer hours than students are actually in school, arriving before the school day starts and working later in the afternoons and evenings to grade schoolwork, create lesson plans, and supervise extracurricular student activities. Teacher in-service days, staff development, and mandatory continuing professional development, education and training all go beyond the academic calendar.

For many teachers, the nature of their job makes it even more difficult to take unplanned absences when child care falls through. There is a shortage of substitute teachers across the country,<sup>21</sup> and teachers are often discouraged from taking unplanned absences given the costs and complexity of arranging substitutes and of disruption to student learning. And while some teachers may have some time off in the summer, not all do. Summer school, continuing education requirements, and planning for the next school year can easily take up an entire summer. In addition, some teachers may need to take a second job over the summer in order to make ends meet. Even in cases where teachers are off from work during the summer, they may not be able to afford to lose a coveted child care slot by removing their child from paid care for a few months. While the majority of people working in elementary and secondary education are teachers, the same issues also apply to other occupations in the industry, such as teacher assistants and those in administrative roles.

### Hospitals and the hospital industry

Another 1.6 million working mothers, or 8 percent of working mothers with a child under age 13, are employed in the hospital industry. This category includes a range of different occupations and job categories, including not only doctors and nurses but also laboratory technologists and specialty technicians, in addition to myriad other jobs. While these are occupations that require significant training and specialty education and thus tend to pay higher wages, they are also jobs with significant gender wage gaps. So while it may be difficult to imagine that a surgeon has difficulty affording high-quality child care, it is much easier to imagine the challenges faced by nurses or medical technicians in the same hospital setting.

Because hospitals must be open 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, hospital schedules are much less likely to align with operating hours for a traditional child care arrangement. People who are employed in hospitals are likely to encounter longer shifts, overnight and weekend shifts, and work on holidays. These are all times when formal child care programs, whether center- or home-based, are more likely to be closed or to charge an additional premium for nontraditional hours.

## Food services

The restaurant and food services industry employs an additional 1.3 million working mothers, or 7 percent of working mothers with a child under age 13. The food service industry is notorious for offering demanding and often low-quality employment opportunities. The federal tipped minimum wage remains stuck at \$2.13 per hour, making tipped food service workers dependent on their customers for tips, which tend to be highest on nights and weekends, the same time that most child care programs are closed or are even more expensive.<sup>22</sup> A study of restaurant workers in New York conducted by the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United found that affordable and accessible nighttime child care was unavailable for most workers, many of whom had to take on second jobs or change jobs in order to address their families' child care needs, especially when their children were very young.<sup>23</sup>

## State exceptions

For almost all states, elementary and secondary education, hospitals, and food services were the top three industries for working mothers with children under age 13. However, two states and the District of Columbia were exceptions:

- **In Delaware**, banking services is the third-most-common industry for working mothers with a young child, with 7 percent falling into this category. (see Appendix 1 for more information) In spite of its small size, the state of Delaware has an outsize role in the banking industry, due to a history of state incentives to entice the banking industry to establish operations there.<sup>24</sup> Banking services is the fifth-most-common industry for all workers in the state, regardless of gender or parental status.
- **In the District of Columbia**, national security and international affairs is the third-most-common industry for working mothers with a young child, with 6 percent of mothers working in this field. Again,

this is due to the unique economy of the U.S. capital, where national security and international affairs represents the fourth-most-common industry across all workers and employs 4.5 percent of all workers.

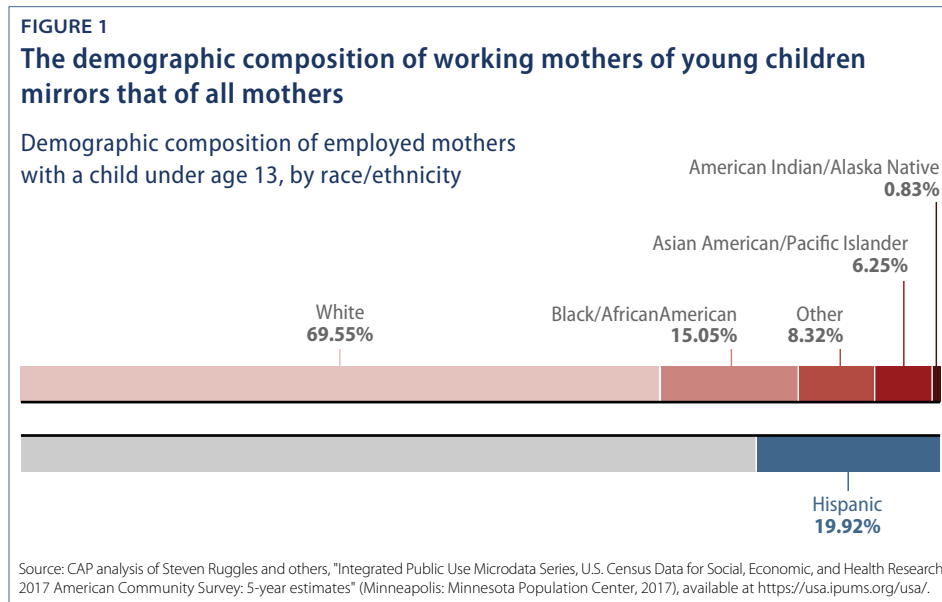
- **In Nevada**, travel accommodations—which includes jobs working in hotels and casinos—is the most common industry for working mothers with a young child, employing 10 percent of all working mothers in the state. Nevada's state economy is highly dependent upon tourism, and the leisure and hospitality sector accounts for one-quarter of the state's jobs, with travel accommodations being the most common industry for all workers.<sup>25</sup> Notably, these are jobs that are very likely to involve night and weekend shifts and to offer low wages.<sup>26</sup>

For a complete list of top industries for working mothers by state, see Appendix 1.

## Race and ethnicity

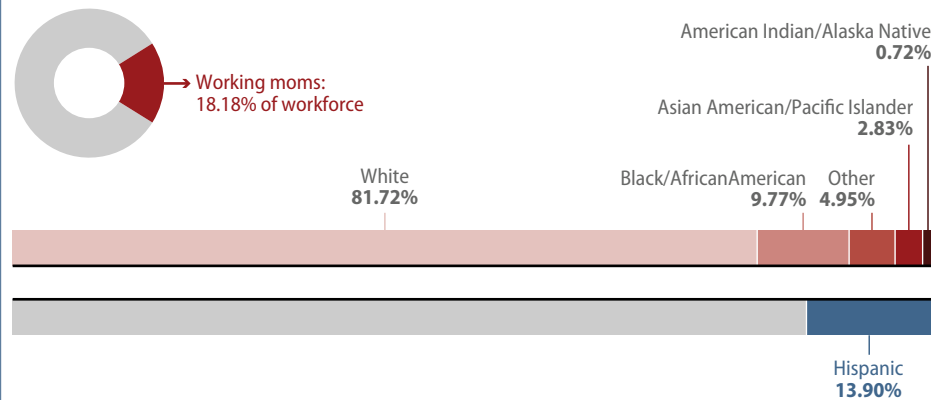
The demographics of working mothers of young children mirror those of all mothers of children under age 18. (see Figure 1) Likewise, the most common industries in which mothers are employed are roughly the same across race and ethnicity, with some exceptions. For example, the top industry for Black mothers is hospitals and the top industry for Hispanic mothers is food service. These patterns are notable because they suggest

that the jobs that are most likely to be unionized and come with benefits—such as those in elementary and secondary schools—are most likely to be held by white mothers.<sup>27</sup> And the jobs with the lowest pay, least predictable hours, and lowest benefits—food service jobs—are disproportionately likely to be held by Hispanic mothers. Mothers of color in particular are also likely to be overrepresented in other vital industries such as child care, home health care services and nursing facilities, and agriculture.



While white women make up the majority of all mothers and also the majority of working mothers of children under age 13, they are overrepresented in elementary and secondary schools, making up more than 80 percent of working mothers in this field. Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic mothers, as well as mothers who identify as the “other” racial category, are all underrepresented in the industry. (see Figure 2) Black mothers, for example, make up 15 percent of all working mothers with young children but comprise less than 10 percent of those working in elementary and secondary schools.

**FIGURE 2**  
**White mothers are overrepresented**  
**as workers in elementary and secondary schools**



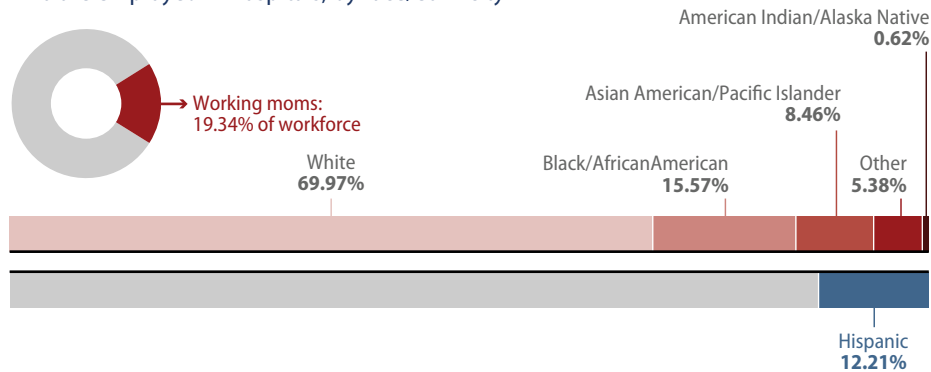
Source: CAP analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

The racial demographics of mothers working in the hospital industry are more reflective of the demographics of all working mothers, although Asian and Pacific Islander mothers are slightly overrepresented at roughly 8.5 percent—compared with 6.25 percent of the overall population of working mothers—and mothers who identify as “other” are underrepresented at 5 percent, compared with more than 8 percent of the population of working mothers. Hispanic mothers are also underrepresented, making up only about 12 percent of working mothers with young children in the hospital industry, despite being 20 percent of the overall population of working mothers with a child under age 13. (see Figure 3) The broad industry categories can also mask racial and ethnic segregation within occupations. For example, white and Asian and Pacific Islander mothers who have small children and work in the hospital industry are roughly twice as likely to be registered nurses, an occupation that pays higher wages, compared with Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Hispanic mothers. Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Hispanic mothers are all much more likely to be working as health aides, technicians, cleaners, or receptionists than white and Asian and Pacific Islander mothers.<sup>28</sup>

FIGURE 3

### Hispanic mothers are underrepresented as workers in hospitals

Demographic composition of mothers with a child under age 13 who are employed in hospitals, by race/ethnicity

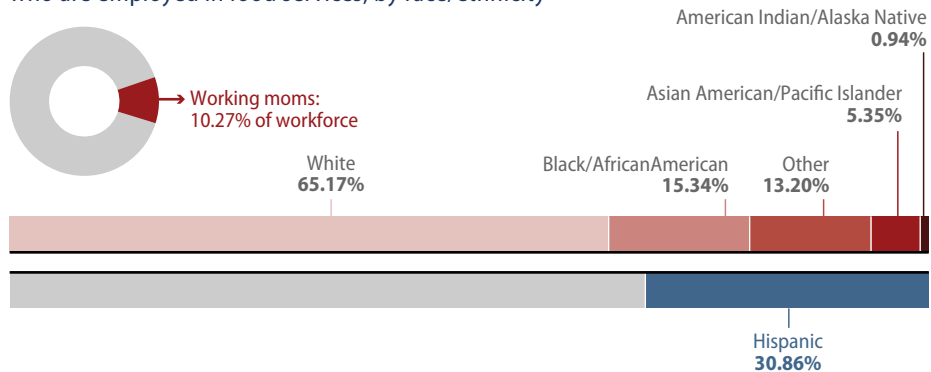


Source: CAP analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

FIGURE 4

### Hispanic mothers are overrepresented as workers in food services

Demographic composition of mothers with a child under age 13 who are employed in food services, by race/ethnicity



Source: CAP analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

The food service industry demographics largely mirror overall racial demographics for working mothers, although the ethnic demographics show a clear overrepresentation of Hispanic mothers in the industry. (see Figure 4) Although mothers in the “other” racial category are slightly overrepresented, in general white, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and American Indian and Alaska Native mothers demonstrate employment in the food service industry in roughly the same patterns as the overall population. However, mothers who identify as Hispanic are much more likely to be employed in food services, making up close to one-third of all working mothers with young children in the field, despite only comprising 20 percent of working mothers with children under age 13 overall.

# The staggering expense of child care

Parents across the income spectrum report difficulty affording child care for their children, proving that this is not only a problem for very low-income families. This is not surprising, given the fact that the cost of child care has more than doubled over the past 20 years, while wages for workers have been largely stagnant over the same time period.<sup>29</sup> Black mothers are significantly more likely to report cost as a barrier to accessing child care compared with white mothers,<sup>30</sup> a fact that reflects the impact of the racial wage gap and Black women's lower wages in spite of their high levels of labor force attachment and educational attainment.<sup>31</sup>

When the annual price of a child care center for two children under age 5—estimated at \$20,544 in 2018<sup>32</sup>—is compared with the median household income and the median personal income for working mothers overall, by race and ethnicity and those working in the most common industries, in no instance does the cost for care meet federal guidelines for affordability. For all working mothers with young children under age 5, this is more than one-quarter (29 percent) of the total median household income and 75 percent of median personal income. For Black and American Indian and Alaska Native women, the cost of child care for two young children in center-based care is more than half of median household income (56 percent and 51 percent, respectively), and nearly half of median household income for Hispanic mothers. For an average Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, or Hispanic working mother, the average price of a child care center for two young children would meet or exceed all of her earnings. (see Table 2) And while child care is challengingly expensive for most families, unmarried parents who are raising their children on one income are even harder hit.

Among mothers employed in elementary and secondary schools, the results are slightly better but still far from affordable. In households with a child under age 5 in which the mother is employed in an elementary or secondary school, the cost of child care would eat up more than one-fifth of total household income (21 percent) and roughly half of the median mother's personal income (48 percent).<sup>33</sup> These results are similar for white and Asian and Pacific Islander mothers, and child care for two young children would require one-quarter of median household income for Hispanic mothers (25 percent) and

approximately one-third for Black and American Indian and Alaska Native mothers (32 percent). For these mothers of color, child care costs for an infant and a 4-year-old would represent more than half of personal income (55 percent for Black mothers, 63 percent for American Indian and Alaska Native mothers, and 58 percent for Hispanic mothers).<sup>34</sup>

For all working mothers with young children working in food services, annual tuition for two children in center-based child care is equal to more than half—62 percent—of total median household income.<sup>35</sup> And across all racial and ethnic groups, the cost of child care is higher than working mothers’ median personal income in the food services sector.

**TABLE 2**  
**Price of child care for two children under age 5 as a percentage of median total household and median personal income, by mother’s industry and race/ethnicity**

Race or ethnicity	All working mothers		Mothers employed in elementary and secondary schools		Mothers employed in hospitals		Mothers employed in food services	
	Share of median household income	Share of median personal income	Share of median household income	Share of median personal income	Share of median household income	Share of median personal income	Share of median household income	Share of median personal income
Overall	29%	75%	21%	48%	21%	46%	62%	160%
White	26%	67%	20%	47%	21%	45%	57%	152%
Black or African American	56%	98%	32%	55%	35%	63%	98%	188%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	51%	100%	32%	63%	34%	68%	65%	168%
Hispanic	42%	101%	25%	58%	27%	58%	60%	155%
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	17%	46%	18%	43%	14%	30%	38%	130%

Note: Total family and personal income is for families with children under age 5.

Source: CAP analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, “Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates” (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

## The effect of high child care costs

The high cost of child care limits the options available to working parents and working mothers in particular. For example, when families are unable to find child care, the proportion of employed mothers in the United States drops from 89 percent to 77 percent, whereas there is no statistically significant impact on fathers’ employment.<sup>36</sup>

Mothers living in “child care deserts”—areas where there is little to no access to quality child care—have labor force participation rates that are 3 percent lower than those in communities where there is an adequate supply, and the effects are even more pronounced in low-income communities.<sup>37</sup> Even when mothers do not exit the labor force, there may still be other negative consequences on their employment when they cannot access reliable child care. In 2016, close to 2 million parents with a child under age 5 either quit, did not take a new job, or had to greatly change their job due to problems with child care.<sup>38</sup>

Both nursing and teaching have periodically experienced shortages of qualified individuals to meet the need in schools and hospitals. In education, states with low teacher pay have experienced shortages, walkouts, and strikes in the past few years as teachers seek salaries that will allow them to better provide for their families.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, with a large cohort of nurses near retirement age and an aging Baby Boomer population, nurses are both in high demand and short supply, which compromises access to health care and the quality of patient care.<sup>40</sup> While child care is certainly not the only contributing factor, it must be part of solutions to increase net wages, reduce job-related stress, and improve the pipeline of qualified workers.

Right now, the same women who spend their days teaching and caring for others’ family members may find themselves in the position of being unable to afford child care to ensure the health and well-being of their own children. Given the current trends, it is highly likely that the average teacher working to ensure another parent’s child learns how to read also has difficulty affording high-quality early education for her own child; or that the nurse comforting a scared child in the hospital may have to worry about the safety of her own children while she works an overnight shift; or that the server taking an order from parents out on their date night is not likely to be able to easily afford child care for her own children when she goes to work, let alone if she wants to take a night off.

This untenable financial situation can force working parents to make choices they may not want to—leaving the labor force to provide unpaid care themselves; reducing their work hours; changing jobs to those with more flexibility but lower pay; or spending too much of their income on child care, leaving them with little remaining to pay for other necessities. When mothers leave the labor force for extended periods of time to care for their children, each year out of paid employment can cost their family more than three times the parent’s annual salary in lifetime income.<sup>41</sup>



Certainly, parents should have the option to scale back at work to spend more time with their children, but too often they are forced into this decision because child care is inaccessible; this forced choice can and often does have significant negative ramifications on families. When working parents reduce their work hours, they may lose out on more than just earnings, since many benefits such as access to health insurance and job-protected leave are often tied to work hours. One-third of working parents with part-time hours report that they would ask for more hours at work if they had access to more affordable and reliable child care, indicating that for many, this is the result of an impossible financial position in which parents simply cannot afford to work more hours even though working more would likely boost their income.<sup>42</sup>

This, in turn, can wreak havoc on individual families' economic security, in addition to having a negative outcome for the overall economy. If women in the United States participated in the labor force at the same rate as women in Canada or Germany—countries that have made greater investments in a whole suite of work-family policies, including paid leave and child care—the result would be an additional 5 million more women in the labor force and more than \$500 billion in estimated additional economic activity each year.<sup>43</sup>

## Policy implications

The debate around the costs of child care, why it is so expensive, and who should bear the costs needs to be reframed. It must be acknowledged as part of this discussion that when families lack access to affordable child care, it has a disproportionate negative effect on working mothers. And this, in turn, has consequences for the industries where working mothers are overrepresented, thus affecting the larger economy as well.

Because child care within families tends to fall primarily on mothers, it is not uncommon for families to in essence “do the math” and decide that it is cheaper for women to exit the workforce or scale back on paid employment in order to provide unpaid child care within the home. Although the long-term costs of exiting the labor force, even for a short period of time, compound over time and entail much more than short-term lost wages,<sup>44</sup> this is still a choice that many families feel pressured to make, especially when the prevailing wages in the most common industries for working mothers are insufficient to cover child care costs. While the high cost of child care is not only a women’s issue, the simple truth is that when families struggle to find and afford care, mothers are most likely to bear the burden and suffer the consequences, including being less likely to be employed.

The labor force participation rate of mothers reached a peak of 73 percent in 2000 and has been stagnant or slightly declining ever since.<sup>45</sup> This pattern is likely to be at least partially due to a lack of work-family policies such as access to comprehensive paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, affordable child care, and efforts to address the racial and gender wage gap—all policies that are more common in countries that have not experienced the same decline in mothers’ labor force participation.<sup>46</sup> Policies that reinforce workers’ right to join a union and negotiate wages and benefits across an industry can also improve wages; provide a platform for advocating for better working conditions; and create a structure for advocating for policies that support working mothers, such as public funding for child care. A number of states have recognized the rights of home care and child care workers who are providing support for clients funded through government assistance to bargain collectively.<sup>47</sup> The evidence suggests that the United States can reverse this trend and increase women’s labor force participation, which will grow the economy and improve family economic security, by implementing similar complementary policies that increase wages and address the challenges of managing work and family.

Given that white mothers tend to occupy industries and professions with higher wages and access to benefits, work-family policies must be implemented with an intentionality toward racial equity, including ensuring that such policies and benefits are available to women of color, who are more likely to hold lower-wage positions within industries dominated by working mothers. Otherwise, well-meaning policies could have the unintended consequence of exacerbating existing gaps in compensation between non-Hispanic white women and women of color.

One immediate step Congress can take is to pass the Child Care for Working Families Act, which would limit what families pay for child care to 7 percent of household income, increase child care options with a particular focus on nontraditional hours, and boost compensation and benefits for the early childhood workforce. An estimated 1.6 million lower-income mothers would reenter the paid labor force as a result, and the average hourly wage for center-based child care workers—an occupation that is disproportionately women of color—would increase by 26 percent nationally, from an average annual income of \$26,000 to \$33,000.<sup>48</sup> Already, there is some evidence of the positive relationship between improved child care access and increased labor force participation. Since Washington, D.C., implemented universally available preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds in 2009, there has been a 10 percent increase in the maternal labor force participation rate that can be attributed to preschool expansion.<sup>49</sup>

In 2018, Congress provided much-needed funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which has allowed states to expand child care assistance to families and increase payment rates so that parents can choose from more child care options. However, over a decade of chronic underfunding means that much more investment and reform is necessary before child care assistance reaches all families who need it.

### **How the Child Care for Working Families Act would affect hospitality workers in Nevada**

More than 375,000 Nevadans work in the hospitality and leisure industry, driven by the gaming and entertainment industry that dominates the state's economy.<sup>50</sup> Not surprisingly, travel accommodations and food services are top industries for working mothers. Approximately 89 percent of children under age 13 in families with parents employed in the hospitality and leisure industry would be eligible for the Child Care for Working Families Act.<sup>51</sup> A typical Nevada family of four earning the median income would pay \$28 per week for child care, saving \$17,600 annually based on current child care center prices.<sup>52</sup>

# Conclusion

Working mothers are central to the nation's economic growth, the development and maintenance of healthy communities, and their families' financial security. Because most mothers work for pay even when they have very young children, adequate investments in child care are vital to the economic, physical, and emotional health of families and communities. This is true at the individual level given the central role most mothers play within families to provide and coordinate care. But it is also true within the larger community context because working mothers of young children are likely to be employed in the industries that help support the education, care, and employment of other families as well.

Without the paid labor of working mothers, the normal functioning of state economies across the country would grind to a halt, but too many working mothers face difficulty affording the child care that allows them to remain employed. As a result, many mothers reduce their work hours, change jobs, or leave the labor force entirely to meet child care needs, which unnecessarily hampers economic growth and family well-being. Any sound economic strategy to ensure a prosperous, strong, and secure America moving forward must invest in child care.

---

## About the authors

**Sarah Jane Glynn** is a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.

**Katie Hamm** is the vice president for Early Childhood Policy at the Center.

---

## Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to Cristina Novoa for conducting the data analyses that form the basis of this report. Nada Ahmed and Steven Jessen-Howard also provided valuable research support for this report. Karla Walter provided helpful feedback on previous drafts of this report.

# Appendix 1

**TABLE A1**  
**State and national comparison of top industries for working mothers with children under age 13, by race/ethnicity**

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
<b>All races and ethnicities</b>						
Nationwide	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	8	Food services	7
Alabama	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	8	Food services	8
Alaska	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	9	Food services	5
Arizona	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Arkansas	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	8	Food services	7
California	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Colorado	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Connecticut	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	8	Food services	5
Delaware	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	9	Banking and related services	7
District of Columbia	Food services	7	Elementary and secondary schools	6	National security & international affairs	6
Florida	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	7	Food services	7
Georgia	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Food services	8	Hospitals	7
Hawaii	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Food services	7	Hospitals	7
Idaho	Hospitals	9	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	5
Illinois	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	8	Food services	7

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Indiana	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	10	Food services	7
Iowa	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	9	Food services	5
Kansas	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Kentucky	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	7
Louisiana	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	9	Food services	7
Maine	Hospitals	11	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Food services	6
Maryland	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
Massachusetts	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	10	Food services	6
Michigan	Hospitals	10	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	7
Minnesota	Hospitals	10	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	5
Mississippi	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	8
Missouri	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Montana	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	9	Food services	7
Nebraska	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	10	Food services	4
Nevada	Travel accommodations	10	Food services	9	Elementary and secondary schools	8
New Hampshire	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	11	Food services	6
New Jersey	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	7	Food services	5
New Mexico	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Food services	9	Hospitals	7
New York	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	8	Food services	5
North Carolina	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	8	Food services	8
North Dakota	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	5
Ohio	Hospitals	10	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	7

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Oklahoma	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	7	Food services	7
Oregon	Hospitals	8	Elementary and secondary schools	8	Food services	7
Pennsylvania	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Rhode Island	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
South Carolina	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	8	Food services	8
South Dakota	Hospitals	13	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Food services	5
Tennessee	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	8	Food services	8
Texas	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Food services	7	Hospitals	7
Utah	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	7	Food services	5
Vermont	Elementary and secondary schools	13	Hospitals	9	Food services	5
Virginia	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Washington	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
West Virginia	Hospitals	11	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Food services	8
Wisconsin	Hospitals	10	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	5
Wyoming	Elementary and secondary schools	14	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
<b>White</b>						
Nationwide	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
Alabama	Elementary and secondary schools	13	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Alaska	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Outpatient care centers	4
Arizona	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Arkansas	Elementary and secondary schools	13	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
California	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Food services	6	Hospitals	6

*continues*



State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Colorado	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Connecticut	Elementary and secondary schools	14	Hospitals	8	Food services	5
Delaware	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
District of Columbia	National security and international affairs	8	Civic, social, advocacy organizations, and grant making and giving services	7	Legal services	7
Florida	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Food services	7	Hospitals	7
Georgia	Elementary and secondary schools	13	Food services	7	Hospitals	7
Hawaii	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Idaho	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	10	Food services	5
Illinois	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
Indiana	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	7
Iowa	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	5
Kansas	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Kentucky	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	10	Food services	7
Louisiana	Elementary and secondary schools	14	Hospitals	10	Food services	6
Maine	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	12	Food services	6
Maryland	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	8	Food services	5
Massachusetts	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Michigan	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	7
Minnesota	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	4
Mississippi	Elementary and secondary schools	14	Hospitals	12	Food services	6

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Missouri	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Montana	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	9	Food services	7
Nebraska	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	4
Nevada	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Food services	9	Traveler accommodation	7
New Hampshire	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	11	Food services	6
New Jersey	Elementary and secondary schools	15	Hospitals	6	Food services	5
New Mexico	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Food services	8	Hospitals	8
New York	Elementary and secondary schools	16	Hospitals	7	Food services	4
North Carolina	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	9	Food services	7
North Dakota	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	5
Ohio	Hospitals	10	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Food services	7
Oklahoma	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
Oregon	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	9	Food services	7
Pennsylvania	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	6
Rhode Island	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	9	Food services	7
South Carolina	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Hospitals	9	Food services	7
South Dakota	Hospitals	14	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Banking and related services	5
Tennessee	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	8	Food services	8
Texas	Elementary and secondary schools	13	Food services	8	Hospitals	6
Utah	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	8	Food services	4
Vermont	Elementary and secondary schools	13	Hospitals	9	Food services	5
Virginia	Elementary and secondary schools	13	Hospitals	7	Food services	5

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Washington	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
West Virginia	Hospitals	11	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Food services	8
Wisconsin	Hospitals	11	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Food services	5
Wyoming	Elementary and secondary schools	15	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
<b>Black or African American</b>						
Nationwide	Hospitals	8	Food services	7	Elementary and secondary schools	7
Alabama	Food services	10	Hospitals	7	Elementary and secondary schools	6
Alaska	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arizona	Hospitals	7	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Banking and related services	5
Arkansas	Food services	9	Hospitals	9	Nursing Care Facilities	8
California	Hospitals	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Individual and family services	6
Colorado	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	6	Nursing Care Facilities	6
Connecticut	Hospitals	11	Nursing Care Facilities	9	Home health care services	6
Delaware	Hospitals	10	Banking and related services	8	Nursing Care Facilities	7
District of Columbia	Food services	7	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	6
Florida	Hospitals	9	Food services	8	Elementary and secondary schools	7
Georgia	Food services	9	Elementary and secondary schools	8	Hospitals	7
Hawaii	-	-	-	-	-	-
Idaho	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illinois	Hospitals	7	Food services	7	Nursing Care Facilities	6
Indiana	Nursing Care Facilities	8	Hospitals	7	Food services	7
Iowa	Nursing Care Facilities	7	Food services	6	Department and discount stores	5
Kansas	Nursing Care Facilities	7	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Home health care services	6
Kentucky	Food services	11	Hospitals	7	Nursing Care Facilities	6

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Louisiana	Food services	10	Hospitals	8	Nursing Care Facilities	8
Maine	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maryland	Hospitals	10	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Nursing Care Facilities	5
Massachusetts	Hospitals	13	Nursing Care Facilities	11	Food services	5
Michigan	Food services	8	Hospitals	7	Motor vehicles and motor vehicle manufacturing	7
Minnesota	Nursing Care Facilities	10	Hospitals	9	Child day care services	8
Mississippi	Food services	10	Hospitals	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7
Missouri	Hospitals	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Nursing Care Facilities	7
Montana	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nebraska	Hospitals	12	Nursing Care Facilities	8	Animal slaughtering and processing	7
Nevada	Travel accommodations	16	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Food services	6
New Hampshire	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Jersey	Hospitals	8	Elementary and secondary schools	8	Nursing Care Facilities	7
New Mexico	Food services	16	Outpatient care centers	10	Travel accommodations	10
New York	Hospitals	11	Home health care services	8	Elementary and secondary schools	7
North Carolina	Food services	8	Hospitals	8	Elementary and secondary schools	7
North Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ohio	Hospitals	9	Nursing Care Facilities	8	Food services	7
Oklahoma	Food services	11	Hospitals	7	Nursing Care Facilities	6
Oregon	Hospitals	9	Food services	8	Child day care services	7
Pennsylvania	Hospitals	9	Nursing Care Facilities	7	Home health care services	6
Rhode Island	Nursing Care Facilities	13	Home health care services	8	Residential care facilities, without nursing	7
South Carolina	Food services	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	7
South Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Tennessee	Food services	7	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Hospitals	6
Texas	Hospitals	9	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	5
Utah	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vermont	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virginia	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	7	Food services	6
Washington	Hospitals	9	Child day care services	6	Food services	5
West Virginia	Food services	12	Nursing Care Facilities	10	Hospitals	9
Wisconsin	Nursing Care Facilities	8	Hospitals	7	Home health care services	5
Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Asian American/Pacific Islander</b>						
Nationwide	Hospitals	11	Food services	6	Computer systems designs and related services	5
Alabama	Nail salons and other personal care services	16	Food services	16	Hospitals	8
Alaska	Food services	12	Hospitals	9	Traveler accommodation	7
Arizona	Hospitals	13	Nail salons and other personal care services	8	Elementary and secondary schools	7
Arkansas	Department stores and discount stores	9	Food services	8	Animal slaughtering and processing	7
California	Hospitals	12	Elementary and secondary schools	5	Computer systems design and related services	5
Colorado	Nail salons and other personal care services	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Food services	6
Connecticut	Hospitals	8	Insurance	7	Elementary and secondary schools	6
Delaware	Banking and related activities	13	Other amusement, gambling, and recreation industries	9	Hospitals	9
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	Hospitals	15	Nail salons and other personal care services	10	Food services	6
Georgia	Nail salons and other personal care services	8	Computer systems design and related services	8	Food services	7

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Hawaii	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	8	Traveler accommodation	8
Idaho	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illinois	Hospitals	14	Food services	5	Computer systems design and related services	4
Indiana	Food services	10	Hospitals	8	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	7
Iowa	Hospitals	10	Animal slaughtering and processing	9	Banking and related activities	8
Kansas	Hospitals	10	Food services	9	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	6
Kentucky	Nail salons and other personal care services	13	Food services	12	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	12
Louisiana	Nail salons and other personal care services	17	Food services	13	Hospitals	9
Maine	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maryland	Hospitals	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Computer systems design and related services	7
Massachusetts	Hospitals	11	Computer systems design and related services	11	Food services	5
Michigan	Hospitals	14	Motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment manufacturing	10	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	6
Minnesota	Hospitals	9	Medical equipment and supplies manufacturing	6	Food services	6
Mississippi	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missouri	Hospitals	11	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	7	Nail salons and other personal care services	7
Montana	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nebraska	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	12	Nail salons and other personal care services	10	Hospitals	5
Nevada	Traveler accommodation	15	Hospitals	12	Other amusement, gambling, and recreation industries	7

continues

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
New Hampshire	Hospitals	11	Computer systems design and related services	9	Other professional, scientific, and technical services	7
New Jersey	Hospitals	10	Computer systems design and related services	8	Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing	5
New Mexico	-	-	-	-	-	-
New York	Hospitals	11	Food services	8	Elementary and secondary schools	5
North Carolina	Nail salons and other personal care services	10	Hospitals	8	Computer systems design and related services	7
North Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ohio	Food services	11	Hospitals	10	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	6
Oklahoma	Nail salons and other personal care services	11	Hospitals	10	Food services	8
Oregon	Hospitals	9	Food services	8	Electronic component and product manufacturing	6
Pennsylvania	Hospitals	10	Food services	8	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	6
Rhode Island	Food services	9	Hospitals	9	Computer systems design and related services	5
South Carolina	Food services	12	Nail salons and other personal care services	9	Hospitals	8
South Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tennessee	Hospitals	10	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	7	Nail salons and other personal care services	6
Texas	Hospitals	14	Nail salons and other personal care services	8	Computer systems design and related services	6
Utah	Nail salons and other personal care services	6	Hospitals	6	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	6
Vermont	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virginia	Computer systems design and related services	12	Hospitals	7	Food services	6

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Washington	Hospitals	10	Computer systems design and related services	6	Food services	5
West Virginia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wisconsin	Hospitals	10.05	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	8	Insurance	6
Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>						
Nationwide	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	7	Hospitals	6
Alabama	-	-	-	-	-	-
Alaska	Executive offices and legislative bodies	14	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	8
Arizona	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	8	Food services	6
Arkansas	-	-	-	-	-	-
California	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Food services	7	Travel accommodations	4
Colorado	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Offices of physicians	10	Hospitals	7
Connecticut	-	-	-	-	-	-
Delaware	-	-	-	-	-	-
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	Hospitals	11	Food services	5	Elementary and secondary schools	5
Georgia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hawaii	-	-	-	-	-	-
Idaho	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illinois	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indiana	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iowa	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kansas	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kentucky	-	-	-	-	-	-
Louisiana	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maine	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maryland	-	-	-	-	-	-
Massachusetts	-	-	-	-	-	-

*continues*



State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Michigan	Food services	9	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	8	Department and discount stores	6
Minnesota	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	15	Food services	10	Executive offices and legislative bodies	7
Mississippi	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missouri	-	-	-	-	-	-
Montana	Colleges and universities, including junior colleges	8	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	7
Nebraska	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nevada	Executive offices and legislative bodies	9	Elementary and secondary schools	8	Food services	8
New Hampshire	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Jersey	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Mexico	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	8	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	7
New York	Child day care services	9	Food services	6	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	5
North Carolina	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Food services	10	Hospitals	7
North Dakota	Hospitals	11	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Nursing care facilities	9
Ohio	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oklahoma	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	8	Food services	6
Oregon	Residential care facilities, without nursing	10	Food services	8	Hospitals	5
Pennsylvania	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rhode Island	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Carolina	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Dakota	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	9	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	8
Tennessee	-	-	-	-	-	-
Texas	Food services	12	Elementary and secondary schools	11	Hospitals	6

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Utah	Food services	9	Hospitals	7	Business support services	6
Vermont	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virginia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Washington	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	12	Executive offices and legislative bodies	12	Outpatient care centers	6
West Virginia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wisconsin	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	19	Elementary and secondary schools	8	Executive offices and legislative bodies	7
Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Hispanic, all races</b>						
Nationwide	Food services	10	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	5
Alabama	Food services	16	Animal slaughtering and processing	7	Elementary and secondary schools	6
Alaska	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arizona	Food services	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	5
Arkansas	Animal slaughtering and processing	19	Food services	10	Elementary and secondary schools	5
California	Food services	9	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	5
Colorado	Food services	11	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Services to buildings and dwellings	6
Connecticut	Food services	9	Hospitals	6	Services to buildings and dwellings	5
Delaware	Food services	12	Animal slaughtering and processing	6	Services to buildings and dwellings	5
District of Columbia	Food services	24	Services to buildings and dwellings	11	Travel accommodations	8
Florida	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Food services	7	Hospitals	5
Georgia	Food services	12	Services to buildings and dwellings	7	Private households	5
Hawaii	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Food services	7	Travel accommodations	4
Idaho	Food services	9	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Agriculture	3

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
Illinois	Food services	12	Hospitals	6	Elementary and secondary schools	5
Indiana	Food services	13	Hospitals	7	Motor vehicles and motor vehicle manufacturing	5
Iowa	Animal slaughtering and processing	17	Food services	11	Nursing care facilities	6
Kansas	Food services	14	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Animal slaughtering and processing	5
Kentucky	Food services	15	Travel accommodations	7	Elementary and secondary schools	5
Louisiana	Food services	11	Private households (9290)	10	Services to buildings and dwellings	5
Maine	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maryland	Food services	17	Services to buildings and dwellings	11	Elementary and secondary schools	5
Massachusetts	Food services	10	Hospitals	8	Individual and family services	5
Michigan	Food services	9	Motor vehicles and motor vehicle manufacturing	8	Hospitals	6
Minnesota	Food services	14	Elementary and secondary schools	6	Employment services	5
Mississippi	Food services	12	Elementary and secondary schools	8	Animal slaughtering and processing	6
Missouri	Food services	13	Services to buildings and dwellings	5	Hospitals	5
Montana	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nebraska	Animal slaughtering and processing	12	Services to buildings and dwellings	9	Food services	8
Nevada	Food services	14	Travel accommodations	14	Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries	7
New Hampshire	Hospitals	10	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Food services	5
New Jersey	Food services	8	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	5
New Mexico	Food services	11	Elementary and secondary schools	9	Hospitals	7
New York	Food services	8	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Hospitals	6

*continues*

State	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry	Industry	Share of working mothers employed in the industry
North Carolina	Food services	16	Services to buildings and dwellings	7	Elementary and secondary schools	4
North Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ohio	Food services	12	Hospitals	7	Elementary and secondary schools	5
Oklahoma	Food services	16	Elementary and secondary schools	7	Services to buildings and dwellings	5
Oregon	Food services	13	Crop production	7	Hospitals	6
Pennsylvania	Food services	8	Hospitals	5	Elementary and secondary schools	5
Rhode Island	Food services	6	Hospitals	5	Home health care services	4
South Carolina	Food services	9	Services to buildings and dwellings	9	Private households	6
South Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tennessee	Food services	16	Services to buildings and dwellings	9	Travel accommodations	5
Texas	Food services	11	Elementary and secondary schools	10	Hospitals	5
Utah	Food services	12	Services to buildings and dwellings	6	Elementary and secondary schools	5
Vermont	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virginia	Food services	15	Services to buildings and dwellings	10	Elementary and secondary schools	6
Washington	Animal slaughtering and processing	11	Food services	11	Elementary and secondary schools	5
West Virginia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wisconsin	Food services	11	Hospitals	7	Elementary and secondary schools	4
Wyoming	Hospitals	13	Elementary and secondary schools	12	Food services	12

Notes: Blank cells indicate state sample sizes that are too small for analysis. Text highlighted in red indicates data that may not be reliable due to small sample sizes.

Source: CAP analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

# Appendix 2

TABLE A2

## State and national comparison of median income for working mothers with a child under age 13, by industry

State	Median income for mothers working in elementary and secondary schools	Median income for mothers working in hospitals	Median income for mothers working in food services
Nationwide	\$40,954	\$45,800	\$14,613
Alabama	\$41,000	\$36,827	\$11,680
Alaska	\$40,000	\$51,065	\$21,433
Arizona	\$33,547	\$46,297	\$15,320
Arkansas	\$35,000	\$40,000	\$12,410
California	\$42,000	\$57,983	\$15,616
Colorado	\$37,024	\$46,538	\$15,783
Connecticut	\$55,846	\$51,065	\$16,774
Delaware	\$49,641	\$49,641	\$15,000
District of Columbia	\$46,538	\$35,679	\$13,444
Florida	\$38,810	\$41,467	\$15,320
Georgia	\$41,417	\$40,852	\$13,277
Hawaii	\$45,504	\$52,611	\$19,201
Idaho	\$28,500	\$32,800	\$15,513
Illinois	\$44,947	\$45,000	\$14,496
Indiana	\$34,826	\$40,852	\$13,000
Iowa	\$40,000	\$41,000	\$14,500
Kansas	\$37,231	\$41,417	\$13,775
Kentucky	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$13,277
Louisiana	\$40,500	\$41,367	\$13,444
Maine	\$35,746	\$41,367	\$14,731
Maryland	\$50,466	\$51,771	\$16,547
Massachusetts	\$55,000	\$56,880	\$16,341
Michigan	\$41,873	\$41,624	\$13,000

*continues*

State	Median income for mothers working in elementary and secondary schools	Median income for mothers working in hospitals	Median income for mothers working in food services
Minnesota	\$41,367	\$50,600	\$17,158
Mississippi	\$36,000	\$37,880	\$12,000
Missouri	\$38,299	\$40,000	\$15,000
Montana	\$32,000	\$38,000	\$15,321
Nebraska	\$38,932	\$42,000	\$13,000
Nevada	\$41,595	\$51,771	\$17,602
New Hampshire	\$42,402	\$51,771	\$14,298
New Jersey	\$54,129	\$54,812	\$15,513
New Mexico	\$31,062	\$46,538	\$13,460
New York	\$54,812	\$51,065	\$15,783
North Carolina	\$36,052	\$44,193	\$12,721
North Dakota	\$36,827	\$38,483	\$20,000
Ohio	\$44,929	\$43,229	\$13,583
Oklahoma	\$32,682	\$37,564	\$14,479
Oregon	\$33,133	\$47,573	\$14,521
Pennsylvania	\$49,641	\$47,629	\$13,444
Rhode Island	\$58,214	\$49,800	\$19,650
South Carolina	\$39,831	\$41,367	\$13,000
South Dakota	\$32,682	\$43,487	\$16,800
Tennessee	\$37,275	\$38,810	\$13,788
Texas	\$41,417	\$45,959	\$14,082
Utah	\$21,925	\$34,316	\$13,468
Vermont	\$44,000	\$40,510	\$15,783
Virginia	\$42,000	\$44,937	\$15,513
Washington	\$37,482	\$50,000	\$17,677
West Virginia	\$37,788	\$37,686	\$11,785
Wisconsin	\$42,000	\$45,000	\$14,094
Wyoming	\$44,500	\$40,852	\$15,932

Source: CAP analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

---

## Endnotes

- 1 Council of Economic Advisers, "Chapter 4: The Economics of Family-Friendly Workplace Policies," in Executive Office of the President, "Economic Report of the President" (Washington: The White House, 2015), pp. 157–202, available at [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015\\_erp\\_chapter\\_4.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_erp_chapter_4.pdf).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Breadwinner mothers are defined as mothers ages 18 to 60 with a minor child living in their home who are either single working mothers or married mothers who earn as much or more than their husbands. Co-breadwinners are defined as married mothers who earn at least 25 percent of the couple's earnings. For additional information, please see Sarah Jane Glynn, "Breadwinning Mothers Continue to Be the U.S. Norm" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2019), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/05/10/469739/breadwinning-mothers-continue-u-s-norm/>.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Rasheed Malik, "Working Families Are Spending Big Money on Child Care" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2019), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/06/20/471141/working-families-spending-big-money-child-care/>.
- 6 Simon Workman and Steven Jessen-Howard, "Understanding the True Cost of Child Care for Infants and Toddlers" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2018), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/11/15/460970/understanding-true-cost-child-care-infants-toddlers/>.
- 7 Center for American Progress analysis of Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2013–2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2017), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 The average annual price of licensed child care is based on national estimates published in Child Care Aware of America, "The U.S. and the High Price of Child Care: An Examination of a Broken System," available at <https://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/priceofcare/> (last accessed November 2019).
- 10 Kate Bahn and Annie McGrew, "A Day in the U.S. Economy Without Women," Center for American Progress, March 7, 2017, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2017/03/07/427556/a-day-in-the-u-s-economy-without-women/>.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Sarah Jane Glynn, "An Unequal Division of Labor" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2018), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2018/05/18/450972/unequal-division-labor/>.
- 13 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Table 5: Employment status of the population by sex, marital status, and presence and age of own children under 18, 2017–2018 annual averages," available at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.t05.htm> (last accessed November 2019).
- 14 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor force participation rates among mothers," available at [https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2010/ted\\_20100507.htm](https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2010/ted_20100507.htm) (last accessed November 2019).
- 15 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Participation Rates," available at <https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/NEWS-TATS/latest/laborforce-text.htm#LFPchild> (last accessed November 2019).
- 16 Leila Schochet, "The Child Care Crisis Is Keeping Women Out of the Workforce" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2019), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/03/28/467488/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>.
- 17 Ibid.; Bridget Ansel, "Is the cost of childcare driving women out of the U.S. workforce?" (Washington: Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 2016), available at <https://equitablegrowth.org/is-the-cost-of-childcare-driving-women-out-of-the-u-s-workforce/>.
- 18 CAP analysis of Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2013–2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates."
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Brenda Iasevoli, "Substitute-Teacher Shortages Put Schools to Test," *Education Week*, January 17, 2019, available at <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/01/18/substitute-teacher-shortages-put-schools-to-test.html>.
- 22 Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, "Nightcare: The Growing Challenge for Parents on the Late Shift" (Washington: 2016), available at [http://roccunited.org/wp2015b/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Nightcare\\_Report\\_W.pdf](http://roccunited.org/wp2015b/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Nightcare_Report_W.pdf).
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Claire Tsosie, "Why So Many Credit Cards Are From Delaware," *Forbes*, April 14, 2017, available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/clairetsosie/2017/04/14/why-so-many-credit-cards-are-from-delaware/#67e4aad71119>; Christopher Wink, "Why do so many banks have offices in Wilmington?," *Technical.ly*, November 18, 2016, available at <https://technical.ly/delaware/2016/11/18/many-banks-headquartered-wilmington-delaware/>.
- 25 Nevada Resort Association, "Nevada Resort Association Releases 2019 Nevada Gaming Fact Book," Press release, March 4, 2019, available at <http://nevadaresorts.org/press/articles/030419-FactBook.pdf>.
- 26 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "May 2017 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates: Nevada," available at [https://www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes\\_nv.htm#39-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/2017/may/oes_nv.htm#39-0000) (last accessed December 2019).
- 27 For more information on unionization by industry, see Unionstats.com, "Union Membership and Coverage Database from the CPS," available at <http://www.unionstats.com/> (last accessed November 2019).
- 28 CAP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample, 2013–2017.
- 29 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Beta Labs, "BLS Data Viewer: Child care and nursery school in U.S. city average, all urban consumers, seasonally adjusted," available at <https://beta.bls.gov/dataViewer/view/timeseries/CUSR-0000SEEB03> (last accessed October 2019); Drew DeSilver, "For most U.S. workers, real wages have barely budged in decades," *Pew Research Center Fact Tank*, August 7, 2018, available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/07/for-most-us-workers-real-wages-have-barely-budged-for-decades/>.

- 30 Schochet, "The Child Care Crisis Is Keeping Women Out of the Workforce."
- 31 Nina Banks, "Black women's labor market history reveals deep-seated race and gender discrimination," Economic Policy Institute Working Economics Blog, February 19, 2019, available at <https://www.epi.org/blog/black-womens-labor-market-history-reveals-deep-seated-race-and-gender-discrimination/>; National Center for Education Statistics, "Fast Facts: Degrees conferred by race and sex," available at <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72> (last accessed November 2019).
- 32 Child Care Aware of America, "The U.S. and the High Price of Child Care."
- 33 CAP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey (ACS), Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample, 2013-2017; *ibid.*
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 Schochet, "The Child Care Crisis Is Keeping Women Out of the Workforce."
- 37 Rasheed Malik and others, "America's Child Care Deserts in 2018" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2018), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-care-deserts-2018/>.
- 38 Leila Schochet and Rasheed Malik, "2 Million Parents Forced to Make Career Sacrifices Due to Problems with Child Care," Center for American Progress, September 13, 2017, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/news/2017/09/13/438838/2-million-parents-forced-make-career-sacrifices-due-problems-child-care/>.
- 39 Emma García and Elaine Weiss, "The teacher shortage is real, large and growing, and worse than we thought" (Washington: Economic Policy Institute, 2019), available at <https://www.epi.org/publication/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-large-and-growing-and-worse-than-we-thought-the-first-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/>.
- 40 American Association of Colleges of Nursing, "Fact Sheet: Nursing Shortage," available at <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/Factsheets/Nursing-Shortage-Fact-sheet.pdf> (last accessed November 2019).
- 41 Michael Madowitz, Alex Rowell, and Katie Hamm, "Calculating the Hidden Cost of Interrupting a Career for Child Care" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2016/06/21/139731/calculating-the-hidden-cost-of-interrupting-a-career-for-child-care/>.
- 42 Schochet, "The Child Care Crisis Is Keeping Women Out of the Workforce."
- 43 U.S. Department of Labor, "The Cost of Doing Nothing: The Price We All Pay Without Paid Leave Policies to Support America's 21st Century Working Families" (Washington: 2015), available at [http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2609&context=key\\_workplace](http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2609&context=key_workplace).
- 44 Madowitz, Rowell, and Hamm, "Calculating the Hidden Cost of Interrupting a Career for Child Care."
- 45 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women in the labor force: a databook," available at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/2017/home.htm> (last accessed November 2019).
- 46 Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn, "Female Labor Supply: Why is the US Falling Behind?" (Bonn, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labor, 2013), available at <http://ftp.iza.org/dp7140.pdf>.
- 47 See for example, David Rolf, "Life on the Homecare Front," *Generations* 40 (1) (2016): 82–87, available at [http://davidmrolf.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GENS\\_v40n1-Rolf-1.pdf](http://davidmrolf.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GENS_v40n1-Rolf-1.pdf); Jashua Bane, "In Historic Win, California Family Child Care Providers Gain Collective Bargaining Rights," *AFSCME Now*, October 1, 2019, available at <https://www.afscme.org/now/in-historic-win-california-family-child-care-providers-gain-collective-bargaining-rights>.
- 48 Ajay Chaudry and Katie Hamm, "The Child Care for Working Families Act Will Boost Employment and Create Jobs" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2017/12/07/443783/child-care-working-families-act-will-boost-employment-create-jobs/>.
- 49 Rasheed Malik, "The Effects of Universal Preschool in Washington, D.C." (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2018), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/09/26/458208/effects-universal-preschool-washington-d-c/>.
- 50 CAP analysis of Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2013–2017 American Community Survey: 5-year estimates."
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 Leila Schochet, "Proposed Bill Would Help American Families Afford Child Care" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2018), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/09/13/457518/proposed-bill-help-american-families-afford-child-care/>.



---

## Our Mission

The Center for American Progress is an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country.

## Our Values

As progressives, we believe America should be a land of boundless opportunity, where people can climb the ladder of economic mobility. We believe we owe it to future generations to protect the planet and promote peace and shared global prosperity.

And we believe an effective government can earn the trust of the American people, champion the common good over narrow self-interest, and harness the strength of our diversity.

## Our Approach

We develop new policy ideas, challenge the media to cover the issues that truly matter, and shape the national debate. With policy teams in major issue areas, American Progress can think creatively at the cross-section of traditional boundaries to develop ideas for policymakers that lead to real change. By employing an extensive communications and outreach effort that we adapt to a rapidly changing media landscape, we move our ideas aggressively in the national policy debate.

