



Hawai'i KIDS COUNT

E-Bulletin

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BUILDING BLOCKS: STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES 2015

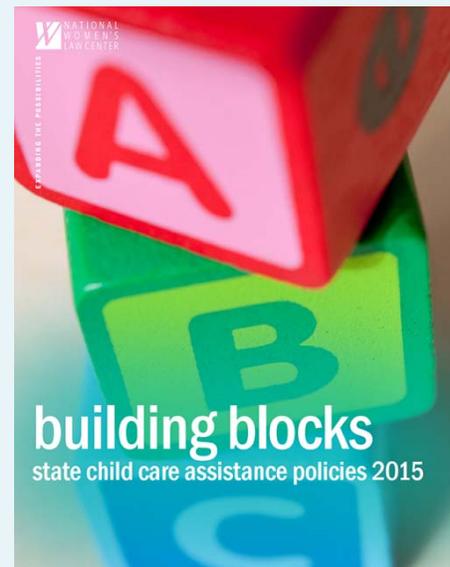
Access to quality child care is crucial for low-income families with young children. Having reliable and high quality care not only supports parents' productivity at work and allows them to participate in training and educational opportunities that promote financial stability, but it is also important for child development and school readiness. Unfortunately, too many low-income families struggle to afford child care. The average fee for full-time care ranges from approximately \$4,000 to \$16,500 a year, depending on where the family lives, the type of care, and the age of the child. Child care assistance can help families with these high child care costs.

The National Women's Law Center tracks trends in child care assistance policies. In their recent report, *Building Blocks: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2015*, the Center examines five critical factors that determine the affordability, accessibility and quality of assistance for all fifty states and the District of Columbia.

According to the report, families in 32 states are better off under one or more key child care policies in 2015 than in 2014, and only 16 states have families that are worse off now than a year ago. For a third year in a row now, the situation for families improved in more states than it worsened. Generally, these improvements have been modest, and too many families still cannot receive the help they need to obtain reliable, high-quality care.

Hawai'i specific data include the following:

- Hawai'i is one of 13 states in which the income eligibility limit remained unchanged between 2014 and 2015; 33 states increased the limit to adjust for inflation and two states lowered the limit.
- Hawai'i is one of the 24 states that did not have a waiting list for all years reported; other states had waiting lists or froze intake (i.e., turning away eligible families without adding their names to a waiting list).



- Hawai'i is one of the 13 states that allows parents to qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job.
- Hawai'i is one of 16 states worse off under one or more child care assistance policies mentioned in the report in February 2015 than in February 2014.
- Hawai'i is the single state that only pays tiered rates for providers caring for children from two years of age to kindergarten entry. .

The full report can be accessed here:

http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/final_nwlc_2015_statechildcareassistancereport_2.pdf.

HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE IS OUT OF REACH FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Staying on the topic of access to quality child care, a new issue brief from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) examines the high cost of child care in the U.S. This brief explores how child care fits into family budgets by measuring how much families need in order to maintain a modest standard of living in over 600 communities nationwide. The report compares child care costs to minimum wages and public college tuition. EPI finds that child care exceeds rent for families with two children (a 4-year-old and an 8 year-old). Child care for a 4-year-old is higher than in-state tuition at a 4-year public college in more than half of the states, while infant costs exceed college tuition in 33 states and the District of Columbia. The report also investigates the higher cost of infant care in 10 locations and the difficulties facing minimum wage earners in finding quality child care for an affordable price. Hawai'i-specific data include the following:



- With a median state minimum wage of \$7.75 in 2014, the annual child care cost for a 4-year-old was over half (56%) of a family's minimum wage earnings, while the cost of infant care was 74%.
- As is the case in 23 other states, the cost of child care for a 4-year-old in Hawai'i exceeds the average cost of in-state tuition at a public 4-year institution.
- The cost of infant care in Hawai'i represents 146% of the average cost of in-state tuition.

The report can be downloaded from the EPI website at: <http://www.epi.org/publication/child-care-affordability/>

KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER UPDATES

Updated data now available on the KIDS COUNT Data Center show that the unemployment rate of parents in Hawai'i has decreased steadily since 2010, following a similar trend to U.S. The percentage of children with at least one unemployed parent has also continued to decrease both nationally and locally as the economy continues to improve. Other data show that while the child poverty rate in Hawai'i remains lower the U.S. rate, the share of children living in poverty is still higher now than before the economic downturn.



- The unemployment rate of parents in Hawai'i dropped from 7% in 2010 to 3% in 2014. The rate decreased from 8% to 5% nationally during that time period.
- In 2010, 10% of children in Hawai'i had at least one unemployed parent compared to 4% in 2014. Nationally, that share went from 11% in 2010 to 7% in 2014.

- The child poverty rate in Hawai'i was 10% in 2008, reached a high of 17% in 2011 and 2012, and was 15% in 2014.

Besides parental unemployment and child poverty data, indicators on teen employment, children in single-parent families and various household types, and youth in detention or correctional facilities have been updated with the most recent available data. Check out more data and trends for the nation and Hawai'i at: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.

ANNOUNCING THE HAWAII CHILDREN'S ACTION NETWORK

Good Beginnings Alliance is now the Hawai'i Children's Action Network!

After almost 20 years as Hawai'i's leading non-profit for young children, the organization relaunched on November 12, 2015, with a new name, new logo and a new website. Check them out at www.hawaii-can.org.

The Hawai'i Children's Action Network will be a grassroots network working on important children's issues, such as quality child care and early education, safe housing for all of Hawai'i's children, access to health care and paid Family Medical Leave. Hawai'i KIDS COUNT remains committed to supporting and working in partnership with the Hawai'i Children's Action Network.

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CENTER ON THE FAMILY

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