

the 2-1-1 Barometer



June 2012

2-1-1 CHILD CARE

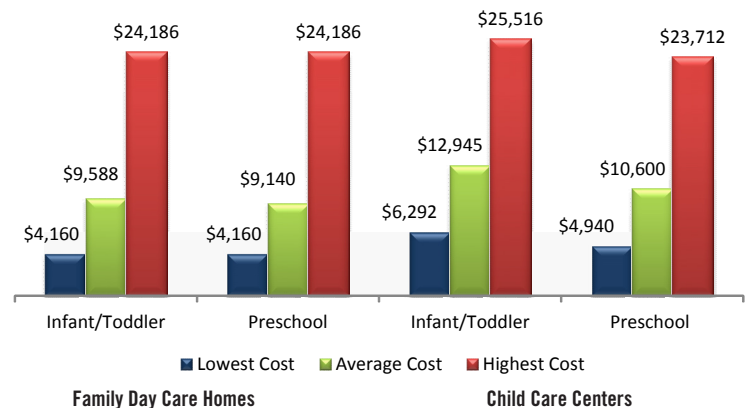
The 2-1-1 Barometer utilizes 2-1-1 data and other information to explore issues affecting Connecticut residents. 2-1-1 tracks the type of help that callers are seeking in order to create a database that serves as a barometer of the needs present in the state.



INTRODUCTION

Quality child care is essential to helping children enter kindergarten socially and academically ready to learn. Finding high quality, affordable child care is a challenge faced by many Connecticut families every day. The average cost of child care in Connecticut ranges from \$9,500 to \$13,000 for infant/toddler care and from \$9,100 to \$10,600 for preschool care (Figure 1). Costs can be even greater depending on where the family lives (Table 1). The high cost often puts child care out of reach for lower and middle income households. These households may be forced to choose between paying for care that may be inadequate and leaving the workforce to care for their children. Increasing the availability of quality child care programs is essential to helping children succeed in school and also impacts the state's economy by allowing parents to participate in the workforce.

Figure 1- Average Annual Cost of Infant/Toddler and Preschool Care Child Care Centers and Family Day Care Homes – 2011



Source: 2-1-1 Child Care

United Way of Connecticut's 2-1-1 Child Care program helps families to find high quality child care and works with child care providers to help improve the quality of care available. This 2-1-1 Barometer reviews early care initiatives of 2-1-1 Child Care and Connecticut's United Ways and trends in child care availability as reported in a recent 2-1-1 Child Care report.

Table 1 – Weekly Cost of Child Care by Service Type and Region, April 2012*

| Service Type | Connecticut | | | Average Cost by Region | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| | Lowest Cost | Highest Cost | Average Cost | Southwest | Northwest | South Central | North Central | East |
| Infant/Toddler Center Full-Time | \$121 | \$490 | \$249 | \$311 | \$235 | \$251 | \$252 | \$203 |
| Infant/Toddler Home Full-Time | \$80 | \$465 | \$184 | \$219 | \$187 | \$181 | \$179 | \$166 |
| Preschool Center Full-Time | \$95 | \$456 | \$204 | \$238 | \$199 | \$202 | \$206 | \$171 |
| Preschool Home Full-Time | \$80 | \$465 | \$176 | \$211 | \$180 | \$173 | \$170 | \$157 |
| School Age Center | \$50 | \$238 | \$104 | \$92 | \$99 | \$105 | \$111 | \$93 |
| School Age Home | \$50 | \$225 | \$84 | \$87 | \$87 | \$86 | \$83 | \$75 |

* Fee information is provided by the child care facilities and is current as of April, 2012. Fee information does not include State or Federal subsidies. School age programs report their fees either in an hourly or weekly rate.

Source: 2-1-1 Child Care



TRENDS IN CHILD CARE

The 2-1-1 Child Care Capacity and Trend Report shows a decline in the number of child care centers and a slight increase in the number of family day care homes in 2011. A five year review of data suggests that as the number of one type of facility increases, the other shows a similar decrease. These fluctuations suggest a possible relationship to Connecticut's unemployment rate; as the unemployment rate rose to over 9% in 2010, the number of Child Care Centers decreased and the number of Family Day Care Homes increased. The decrease in Child Care Centers reflects a decline in demand, while the increase in the number of Family Day Care Homes may suggest an attraction to the child care industry by the recently unemployed. Click here for the full report.

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS OF 2-1-1 CHILD CARE

In addition to maintaining a database of child care providers, 2-1-1 Child Care trains many child care providers and supports special child care projects.

Provider Orientation

2-1-1 Child Care's Provider Orientation provides information on child growth and development to unlicensed child care providers. The emphasis is on types of activities providers use for children at various ages and the strategies used to effectively guide children's behavior. Participants receive:

- Materials to support health and safety in child care: Fire extinguisher, First aid kit, Smoke detector
- Materials to support developmentally appropriate activities: Shape sorters, Puzzles, Movement ribbons, Scissors, Bi-lingual books, Nesting cups

This project also provides an opportunity to learn about the process of becoming a licensed family child care provider.

2-1-1 CHILD CARE



2-1-1 Child Care is Connecticut's official toll-free child care resource and referral service. Last year, 2-1-1 Child Care responded to 14,000 calls and recorded over 86,000 visits to its online child care search engine. 2-1-1 Child Care maintains current listings of all state licensed child care centers and family child care homes, as well as listings for nanny agencies, nursery schools, play groups and summer camp programs. There is no charge to parents who call nor is there a charge to child care programs that are listed. The database can be accessed by dialing 2-1-1 or by visiting www.211childcare.org. Chat services are also available.



Family Child Care Career Support Project (FCCCSP)

This free service helps providers successfully start or improve their child care business. The program offers a wide range of assistance to providers including information on:

- Business Practices
- Communicating with Families
- Child growth and development
- Developmentally appropriate activities
- Routines and scheduling
- Effective environments



Over 280 licensed family child care providers have participated in the FCCCSP since it began in 2007.

Emergency Preparedness in Child Care Settings Providers

2-1-1 Child Care is collaborating with Save the Children and several state agencies to ensure that the needs and safety of children in child care settings are met in the event of an emergency, natural disaster or terrorist threat. Under the Child Care Emergency Response plan, 2-1-1 Child Care:

- Partners with Save the Children to provide disaster preparedness training to child care providers across the state.
- Maps all of the child care centers and family day care homes in the state to allow emergency personnel to identify child care facilities that are in harms ways or are near a disaster site.
- Provides a communication hub for parents in the aftermath of a disaster for family reunification.

Connecticut was the first state to work with Save the Children to develop a comprehensive disaster plan.



EARLY CHILD CARE TRAINING FOR PARENTS AND PROVIDERS

2-1-1 Child Care Early Childhood Specialists provide free training programs for child care providers and for parents. The training programs include:

Training for Parents

- Child Development
- Choosing Quality Child Care
- Early Literacy
- Guide to Care 4 Kids
- Healthy Young Children
- Tips From the Toilet Training Trenches



Training for Providers

- Communicating with Families
- Guiding Behavior
- Oral Language Development
- Supporting Infant and Toddlers Development
- Theories in Child Development
- Understanding Why Children Bite

2-1-1 Child Care Parent/Grandparent Resource Listings

These resource listings are available at www.211childcare.org or directly through the links provided below.

- Fact Sheets on Choosing Quality Child Care
- Finding In-Home Child Care
- Grandparent Resources



Other topical information can be accessed through the United Way 2-1-1 eLibrary at <http://www.211ct.org/InformationLibrary/childrenandfamilies.asp>

CONNECTICUT UNITED WAYS

Connecticut United Ways make substantial investments in early care and education geared toward improving quality and increasing available slots among early care providers. These United Ways play leadership roles in many local early childhood initiatives and provide leadership in the development of strategies and resources to ensure that young children are socially and emotionally ready to enter kindergarten. United Ways provide funding for a wide range of early childhood learning initiatives:

- Book Drives
- Born Learning Trails
- Child Care Capacity Development
- Child FIRST
- Community planning
- Diaper Banks
- Early literacy programs

- Oral health care initiatives
- Parent training
- Perinatal services
- Preschool/child care scholarships
- Professional Development for Family and Child Care Centers
- Therapeutic child care centers



Eleven United Ways serve as fiduciary for the **Graustein Memorial Fund Discovery Initiative**. Discovery helps communities establish collaborative structures for local decision-making that focus on increasing parent engagement and leadership, improving the quality of and access to early care, increasing early language and literacy development and increasing state and local capacity to set goals and measure progress. The United Ways that participate in Discovery include:

- Middlesex United Way
- United Way of Central and Northeastern CT
- United Way of Coastal Fairfield County
- United Way of Greater New Haven
- United Way of Greater Waterbury
- United Way of Greenwich
- United Way of Milford
- United Way of Naugatuck & Beacon Falls
- United Way of West Central Connecticut
- United Way of Western Connecticut
- Valley United Way

2-1-1
CHILDCARE

About 2-1-1 Child Care

Funded by the Connecticut Department of Social Services, 2-1-1 Child Care is a free, multilingual resource that helps families across Connecticut find child care arrangements to best meet their needs. 2-1-1 Child Care offers access to Child Care Referral Specialists who educate parents about quality child care. They also provide technical assistance and resources for early care professionals and data and statistical information on Connecticut's early care system for early care stakeholders. 2-1-1 Child Care maintains current listings of licensed and licensed-exempt child care options throughout Connecticut.

The mission of the United Way of Connecticut is to help meet the needs of Connecticut and its residents by providing information, education and connection to services. United Way of Connecticut provides services with support from the State of Connecticut and Connecticut United Ways.

To access other issues of the 2-1-1 Barometer online go to: www.ctunitedway.org/barometer.asp