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## Child Care Costs in the Mountain West, 2021

Mohit Pande

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, mohit.pande@unlv.edu*

Vanessa Booth

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, vanessa.booth@unlv.edu*

Caitlin J. Saladino

*Brookings Mountain West & The Lincy Institute, caitlin.saladino@unlv.edu*

William E. Brown Jr.

*Brookings Mountain West, william.brown@unlv.edu*

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## CHILD CARE COSTS IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2021

Economic Development & Workforce Fact Sheet No. 58 | August 2023

Prepared by: Mohit Pande, Vanessa M. Booth, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

### PURPOSE:

This fact sheet examines data on child care costs in five Mountain West states: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah, from the Child Care Aware of America's (CCAoA) report "Price of Care: 2021 Child Care Affordability."<sup>1</sup> The original report includes data on the cost of child care and the percent of yearly income allocated to child care for married and single parents. The report analyzes single family respondents and the impact of child care on work schedules. The report also provides information on the state of the child care workforce, including annual incomes of child care workers and the affordability of center-based care for their own children.

### ABOUT THE DATA:

The COVID-19 pandemic brought some stability to child care costs through investments, but still fell short of meeting the needs of the U.S. child care system. Much of the financial burden of child care falls on parents. The CCAoA's 2021 Child Care Affordability Analysis revealed that child care costs consume about 10% of married couples average annual income and 35% for single parents, often exceeding housing costs in most states. The report notes that child care was more expensive than other household expenses such as housing and healthcare in all U.S. regions. The original report focused on child-wellbeing, maternal hardship, and additional metrics. The results highlight the impact of child care constraints and show that 40% of female respondents left their jobs or reduced work schedules due to child care constraints.

### KEY FINDINGS:

1. Among Mountain West states, New Mexico has the highest average annual cost for infant care in full-time center-based settings (\$12,024), while Nevada reports the highest costs for the child care of toddlers to 4-year-olds (\$9,867).
2. In the Mountain West, two parent households spend between 11.7 and 15.0 percent of their yearly income on child care costs for toddlers.
3. Single parent households in the Mountain West spend between 39.9 and 47.3 percent of their yearly income on child care costs.
4. In the Mountain West, child care workers earn \$25,060 to \$33,340, while the cost of full-time center-based care consumes 71.2% to 88.7% of their wages.
5. In Nevada, center-based child care for 2 children costs 88.7% of the average annual income of a child care worker (\$27,620).

Table 1 shows the average annual price of child care at a full-time care center in the Mountain West in 2021. New Mexico had the highest costs of child care for infants. Nevada recorded the highest costs for toddlers (\$9,867) and 4-year-olds (\$9,621). Arizona recorded the lowest cost for the infant (\$8,224) and toddler (\$7,771) age range. Utah reported the lowest cost for those at the age of 4 (\$7,200). Data are unavailable for Colorado, as the Colorado Market Rate Survey was in progress as of September 2022. NR indicates that data was not reported or not available for some categories of care.

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<sup>1</sup> "Price of Care: 2021 Child Care Affordability," (2021). *Child Care Aware of America*. Retrieved from [www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability](http://www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability)

**Table 1: Average Annual Price of Full-Time Center-Based Child Care in the Mountain West, 2021**

| Mountain West State | Average Annual Cost of Child Care |         |            |           |                  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|------------------|
|                     | Infant                            | Toddler | 4-Year-Old | In School | Full-Time Summer |
| Arizona             | \$8,224                           | \$7,771 | \$7,737    | \$3,993   | \$1,723          |
| Colorado            | **N/A                             | **N/A   | **N/A      | **N/A     | **N/A            |
| Nevada              | \$10,390                          | \$9,867 | \$9,621    | *NR       | *NR              |
| New Mexico          | \$12,024                          | \$9,156 | \$8,436    | \$5,196   | *NR              |
| Utah                | \$8,400                           | \$7,800 | \$7,200    | *NR       | *NR              |

Adapted from “Price of Care: 2021 Child Care Affordability.” *Child Care Aware of America*. [www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability](http://www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability)

Table 2 compares the median single-parent income for each state in the Mountain West to the percent of income used to enroll a student in a full-time center-based program. New Mexico had the lowest single parent income (\$25,427) and also displayed the highest percent of income needed for child care across the Mountain West for all ages of child care. Utah consistently had the lowest percent of income used for child care and was ranked 47th nationally. Data are unavailable for Colorado, as the Colorado Market Rate Survey was in progress as of September 2022. NR indicates that data was not reported or not available for some categories of care.

**Table 2: Affordability of Center-Based Care for Single-Parent Households in the Mountain West, 2021**

| Mountain West State | Rank             | Median Income, Single Parent | Percent of Income |              |                 |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
|                     |                  |                              | Infant Care       | Toddler Care | 4-Year-Old Care |
| Arizona             | 33 <sup>rd</sup> | \$32,594                     | 38.1%             | 25.8%        | 28.0%           |
| Colorado            | N/A              | **N/A                        | **N/A             | **N/A        | **N/A           |
| Nevada              | 28 <sup>th</sup> | \$33,609                     | 39.9%             | 35.8%        | 33.0%           |
| New Mexico          | 15 <sup>th</sup> | \$25,427                     | 47.3%             | 36.0%        | 33.2%           |
| Utah                | 47 <sup>th</sup> | \$35,758                     | 31.4%             | 25.7%        | 23.1%           |

Adapted from “Price of Care: 2021 Child Care Affordability.” *Child Care Aware of America*. [www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability](http://www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability)

Table 3 compares the average annual income of a child care professional with the percent of their income used to enroll two children in a full-time child care center. In Nevada, center-based child care for 2 children costs 88.7% of the average annual income of a child care worker (\$27,620). Among Mountain West states, Arizona reports the lowest percent of a child care worker’s income for 2 children in a center-based care, with 71.2% of income needed for child care. The Colorado Market Rate Survey was in progress as of September 2022 and therefore no ranking data are available for the state. NR indicates that data was not reported or not available for some categories of care.

**Table 3: Affordability for Child Care Professionals with Children in Center-Based Care in the Mountain West, 2021**

| Mountain West State | Rank             | Child Care Worker Average Annual Income | Percent of Child Care Worker Income for 2 Children in a Child Care Center |
|---------------------|------------------|---|---|
| Arizona             | 41 <sup>st</sup> | \$30,250                                | 71.2%   |
| Colorado            | N/A              | \$33,340                                | *NR   |
| Nevada              | 23 <sup>rd</sup> | \$27,620                                | 88.7%   |
| New Mexico          | 32 <sup>nd</sup> | \$25,120                                | 81.4%   |
| Utah                | 35 <sup>th</sup> | \$25,060                                | 77.8%   |

Adapted from “Price of Care: 2021 Child Care Affordability.” *Child Care Aware of America*. [www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability](http://www.childcareaware.org/catalyzing-growth-using-data-to-change-child-care/#ChildCareAffordability)