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The State of Care Index is the first survey to measure families' attitudes towards caregiving, the unique pressures they face and how child and senior care responsibilities impact daily life. In this inaugural survey, Care.com examines the state of child care—in cooperation with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)—and senior care while outlining caregiving's overall cost burden and employment impact.

We've presented our main findings in this State of Care Quick Sheet. For the full, in-depth report and survey demographics, please refer to [The State of Care Index™](#) from July 2009.

The Cost of Caregiving

The United States' economy has been in a downturn for 18 months, and the socio-economic concerns are a burden on those making caregiving decisions. With child care consuming large portions of the family budget, the pressure is on parents when they choose care arrangements. Quality and safety are important factors for families weighing options, but so is cost. And when it comes to senior care, cost is the third most important factor in the selection of caregiving arrangements.

Money Matters—Care expenses eat up large portions of income.

- The survey results show the average family with two children spends \$12,445 per year on child care, 14% of their annual household income.
- Eighteen percent belong to the “Sandwich Generation”—those responsible for child and senior care. Families that carry the financial burden for their children and elderly loved ones pay on average \$16,457 each year, making up approximately 19% of their annual household income.
- Over half of respondents (58%) say that their elderly loved ones do not have enough savings or income to support their own needs.

Under Pressure—The cost of care can be a huge burden, especially in a recession.

- In our survey results, 65% of people responsible for senior care and 52% of parents of young children are concerned the economy will force them to make decisions that will negatively impact the quality of care for their loved ones.

Stopgap Solutions—Relying on friends and relatives in a care crisis.

- Families who responded to our survey deal with unexpected care crises by relying on friends and relatives for help (61% for child care, 58% for senior care).
- Families who need to cut costs often cannot afford formal care arrangements and turn to relatives as their primary caregivers—spending 35% less than those who use child care centers and 38% less than those who use in-home providers.

The Caregiving/Work Codependency

When families are caught in a last-minute “care crisis”—the child care center closes, a senior falls ill, work demands change—most are left scrambling without back-up options and have to miss work or readjust schedules. Not surprisingly, this has a demonstrated negative impact on work performance. There’s also a codependency for families caught in the child and senior care cycle: they need to hire care providers in order to work and need to work in order to pay for care. Families struggle to find balance with these demands; each influences the other and has enormous impact on the “state of care” of each family.

Work Numbers—Job performance, career progress and absenteeism are all affected by caregiving.

- As highlighted in our survey, within the past year, 82% of parents have handled a child care crisis and 64% of adults with elderly parents have solved a senior care crisis by missing work.
- 45% of child care survey respondents and 37% of senior care survey respondents say their caregiving responsibilities have negatively impacted their work performance or career progress.

In May 2009, Care.com surveyed a random sample of its nationwide membership base as well as the families in NACCRRRA’s Child Care Aware Parent Network. The survey was conducted online and received 1,297 responses.

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