



State of Care Index

November 2009

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The State of Care Index is the first study of its kind measuring families' attitudes toward caregiving. In its inaugural survey, Care.com examined the state of child care—in cooperation with the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)—as well as the state of senior care. In its second survey, Care.com, NACCRRA, and the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) continued to monitor the state of child care and examined specifically the state of child care for children with special needs. The State of Care Index outlines the annual cost of child care and senior care, details families' efforts to save money on care arrangements, and reports on the tie between employment and caregiving.

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

Families Feeling the Pinch

In our first study, we found that families spend an average of 14 percent of their household income on child care—or an average of \$12,445 per year. As families continue to feel the strain of a down economy and high unemployment, many have changed their primary child care arrangement in order to cut costs. But changing care arrangements is no small undertaking: parents spend many hours—including some work hours—researching and interviewing prospective child care providers. And even with all this careful consideration, families worry that changing care arrangements to reduce costs also reduces the quality of their children's care.

Money Matters—Families are changing their child care arrangements to cut costs.

- 43% of families changed their primary child care arrangement in the past year. 50% of those families made the change due to economic concerns or constraints.
- 63% of families who made economically motivated changes to their child care arrangement were very concerned that the changes had negatively impacted their child's care.

No Small Undertaking—Finding a new caregiver cuts into work time.

- 31% of families devote 12 or more hours to researching and interviewing prospective child care providers each time they change their primary child care arrangement.
- 49% of families who changed their primary child care arrangement confessed to using work hours to research and interview prospective new child care providers.
- 51% of families who changed their primary child care arrangement felt that their caregiving responsibility had negatively impacted their work performance.

Spotlight on Special Needs

This study also turns the spotlight on special needs child care. Special needs families face the same types of challenges that other families do, but these challenges are magnified by the special needs of their children. Special needs families pay a higher hourly rate for child care, devote even more hours to considering a new child care provider, and face care crises more often, scrambling for child care or missing work when their children get sick.

Cost of Care—Special needs families pay a higher hourly rate for child care.

- On average, young children with special needs spend 26 hours per week in the care of someone other than their parents—5 hours per week less than young children without special needs.
- The average hourly cost of child care for one child with special needs is \$10, about 45% more than the \$7 hourly child care cost for one child without special needs.
- All told, special needs families spend an average of \$13,000 per year on child care for all their children, roughly the same amount spent by other families.

All in a Day's Work—Like all parents, parents of children with special needs have caregiving responsibilities that impact their work.

- Special needs families reported that they experience an average of 11 care crises per year. This is more than twice as many crises as other families, who reported experiencing only 5.
- Just like other families, special needs families respond to care crises with solutions that impact their jobs: taking time off or working from home.
- 64% of parents of young children with special needs believe that their caregiving responsibility has negatively impacted their work performance.

In September 2009, Care.com surveyed a random sample of its nationwide membership base, the member base of NACCRRRA's Child Care Aware Parent Network, and the member base of the NFCA. The survey was conducted online and received 1,825 responses.

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For media inquiries:

Cherie Gallarello
Director of Public Relations
cgallarello@care.com
917-239-7284

Karen Greene
Public Relations Associate
kgreene@care.com
781-642-5923

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