



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Cost and Availability of Child Care Continues to Burden Western New York Families New York Remains One of the Least Affordable States**

**BUFFALO, NY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016** — The *2015 Parents and the High Cost of Child Care* report released by Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) confirms that New York is one of the most expensive states for child care. New York is ranked number one as the least affordable state for center-based four-year old care, and number three as least affordable for center-based infant care. Further, the cost of full-time, center-based care for two children is the highest single household expense in most parts of the country, including New York, where care is nearly double the cost of rent. While families continue to struggle with child care costs and finding affordable, quality care solutions, U.S. businesses also pay the price for employee absenteeism due to child care breakdowns, losing approximately \$4.4 billion in 2014.

The report shows a continued trend of child care costs that put a strain on families in the United States, rivaling what the average family pays for one year of college tuition at a four year institution. And while families pay only about 23 percent of the cost of a public college education, with the remainder subsidized by state and federal funds, about 60 percent of funding for child care in the United States comes directly from parents.

The latest report finds that the average center-based child care in New York can cost as much as \$14,144 annually for an infant or \$11,700 annually for a four-year-old. In New York the cost of a year of care in a center for an infant is nearly double the cost of a year of tuition at a public college, the widest gap of any state. In Erie County, the cost for center-based child care for an infant is \$12,792 and a year of tuition at a public college costs \$6,470, reflecting the New York State trend. The cost of child care is especially difficult for families living at or below the federal poverty level. For these families, full-time, center-based care for an infant is 70 percent of family income and 129 percent when two children are in care. For single parents the costs can be overwhelming - in New York annual costs of center-based infant care is over 54 percent of the state median income for single parents.

"Investing in young children at this age is so critically important because of the research that demonstrates that 85 to 90 percent of brain development happens by age 5," said David Voegelé, Executive Director at the Early Care & Learning Council. "When young children do not receive quality care that adequately addresses brain development, they are less likely to be ready for school, ready for life, and ready to be productive members of the community."

"An accessible, strong system of child care is a building block of any healthy, thriving community," commented Lynn Pullano, Chief Executive Officer of Child Care Resource Network in Erie County. "The exciting economic progress occurring across Buffalo-Niagara must include high-quality, affordable child care so parents can remain productive in their jobs while their children are well cared for; this is essential in supporting today's workforce and developing future generations of skilled workers."

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Child Care Resource Network (CCRN) is a nonprofit agency devoted to developing quality, accessible, affordable child care and early learning opportunities for all Western New York children. Since its inception, CCRN has played an integral role in childhood development, education and advocacy, paying particular attention to services that meet the needs of economically challenged and underserved segments of the community. With programs to support families, child care providers, and employers, CCRN serves over 6,000 child care professionals and 4,000 children and families each year.

Child Care Aware® of America, the nation's leading voice for child care, advocates for a quality, safe child care system that supports families' education and overall economic advancement. With the release of the *2015 Parents and the High Cost of Child Care* report, CCAoA recommends three areas to work on as a country to improve the child care system:

- empower providers with a living wage and affordable professional development opportunities;
- help families make good child care decisions with reliable and accessible information; and
- create a seamless, affordable child care system that works for families, which will require an investment from businesses, families, and state and local governments.

Copies of the 2015 Parents and High Cost of Child Care may be downloaded at <http://usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>.

This year's report also includes an interactive map that allows users to quickly access a variety of cost data for each state. Find out child care costs in New York here: <http://usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>.

Stay up to date with Child Care Resource Network at <http://www.wnychildren.org/>

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