



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Robin Lester
Chief Executive Officer
253-383-1735

Marcia Jacobs
Communications & Marketing Mgr.
253-905-9271

WASHINGTON RANKS ON TOP 10 LIST OF LEAST AFFORDABLE STATES FOR CHILD CARE

TACOMA, WA – Dec. 12, 2017 – Washington ranks 3rd in the nation for least affordable child care for an infant in a family child care program, and 7th least affordable for care of an infant in a child care center. Our state also ranks 4th in the nation for least affordable care of a toddler in a family child care program and 7th for care of a toddler in a center. This is the 5th year in a row WA has ranked among the top 10 least affordable states for child care, according to the new 2017 report “Parents and the High Cost of Child Care,” released today by Child Care Aware of America.

This means in WA the average cost to have an infant in a child care center is 15.4% of median income for a married couple and a daunting 51.5% of median income for a single mother. The average cost of having a toddler in a child care center isn’t much lower, about 13.2% of median income for a married couple and 44% of median income for a single mother.”

With approximately 60% of all WA’s children under age 6 residing in families where all adults work, our child care system is a key component of our state’s economy. Right now, the system is in crisis, with costs for infant care surpassing the cost of annual tuition at state colleges, child care supply dwindling and child care professionals continuing to be underpaid to the point where they must rely on public assistance. “High-quality child care is essential for working families in Washington. Every year we connect thousands of families with child care providers in their regions, and what we hear from them is that affording child care is very challenging. This is unsustainable. Washington can, and should, do better,” said

-more-



Robin Lester, chief executive officer of Child Care Aware of Washington, an affiliate of Child Care Aware of America.

Other key findings of the 2017 report show that the cost of caring for an infant in a family child care program consumes 11.7% of the WA median income for married couples and 39.2% of median income for single mothers. For toddlers, the costs take 10.5% of median income for married couples and 35.2% of median income for single mothers. WA also ranks 7th least affordable in the U.S. for care of a 4-year-old in a child care center, with costs taking 11.7% of median income for married couples and 39.1% of median income for single moms.

Child Care Aware of Washington tracks child care supply, demand and costs statewide and in **every county in our state**. For example, in **King County** our data show the median cost for center-based care for infants is 23% of the state's median household income and 15% at family child care programs. In **Yakima County**, the percentages are 20% of state median household income for center-based infant care, and 18% for infant care in a family care program. In **Spokane County**, the percentages are 20% and 15% respectively for infant care. In **Thurston County**, care for an infant in a center consumes 17% of the median household income and 13% for infant care in a family care program.

Our data reports are available here: <http://www.childcarenet.org/about-us/data/>. They provide an important glimpse into the state of child care in WA, and include demographic information about each county, such as the percentage of children living in poverty, child care workforce wages and the average cost of child care.

Child Care Aware of Washington is working with other child care and early learning partners, providers, parents and employers to advocate for increased state investment in our state's child care system. A strong system that ensures access to quality care for every family that needs it, provides families with

-more-



choices in child care options, pays its child care professionals decent wages and improves our economy both today by allowing parents to work, and tomorrow by building the future workforce, is essential for a prosperous Washington.

Child Care Aware of Washington is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to connecting families to local, high-quality, licensed child care and early learning programs, and to supporting providers who deliver high-quality care. As a statewide network of six regional agencies, we work side-by-side with child care providers, offering professional development services and higher education scholarships to help them integrate research-based, best practices into their programs. We are committed to ensuring that each and every child in Washington has access to the quality care and early learning they need to succeed in school and life. For more information, please visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org> and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/> and on Twitter @childcarewa.

Child Care Aware® of America is our nation's leading voice for child care. CCA of America works with state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and other community partners to help ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable child care. CCA of America leads projects that increase the quality and availability of child care, offer comprehensive training to child care professionals, undertake research and advocate for child care policies that improve the lives of children and families. To learn more, visit www.usa.childcareaware.org. Follow them on Twitter @USACHildCare and on Facebook at [facebook.com/usachildcare](https://www.facebook.com/usachildcare).

-end-