

Childcare's Effect on Labor Market

It's no surprise that childcare issues are a serious employment barrier in Northcentral Wisconsin. Many parents are wanting to work but are experiencing challenges. Some of the childcare-specific issues include the high cost of quality childcare and the lack of quality childcare providers. Many times, the cost and lack of availability of childcare outweighs the benefits of going back to work.

Parents in 28 states are paying more for childcare than the average cost of college tuition and fees according to a report from the nonpartisan organization Council for a Strong America. Additionally, a lack of childcare is costing the country \$57 billion per year because parents are leaving work early, or because they're turning down career opportunities.

According to Childcaring.org, the average cost for childcare for an infant one year or younger in Langlade County averages \$775.00/month. In Marathon County, costs average around \$962.00/month. This costs more than monthly rent for many people.

Thankfully, some employers are trying to combat this issue by providing benefits and perks to working parents. For example, in June 2019, Target announced that it will provide all employees 20 days of back-up childcare or elder care. Employees will be able to bring their child to an in-network day care center for \$20 a day or pay a subsidized hourly rate for in-home care. In addition to this, Target increased their paid parental leave policy from 2 weeks to 4 weeks annually to care for a newborn or sick family member. New moms will also get an additional 6-8 weeks of paid maternity leave.

Volm Companies in Antigo recognized childcare costs as an issue and introduced a childcare reimbursement benefit. They reimburse employees \$200/month for 1 child and up to \$300/month for 2 or more children to put towards childcare costs. It doesn't cover the total cost of childcare, but it certainly helps ease the burden.

There are many available community resources that some parents can take advantage of as well, including Wisconsin Shares. The Wisconsin Shares Childcare Subsidy Program helps support low-income working families by providing a childcare cost subsidy while the parents or caregivers are working or participating in another approved activity. More information can be found here (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares>).

In fact, Wisconsin Shares could be a wonderful benefit to utilize while job searching with the assistance of FSET! Other supports that FSET can offer to eligible customers include the initial registration fee and other up-front fees that need to be paid to a provider prior to children getting care. For more information on enrolling in FSET and seeing how we can assist you in your employment goals, contact our main office at (715) 421- 8608.

References:

<https://www.wsaw.com/content/news/508165542.html>

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<https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/10/business/target-child-care-benefit-family-leave/index.html>

<http://www.Childcaring.org>