

Paying the Price for the High Cost of Preschool in California

Report highlights from FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California*

This brief presents highlights from a report by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California*, a bipartisan, anti-crime organization of over 350 sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors. FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS *California* is part of the national FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS organization with over 2,500 members nationwide.

Summary

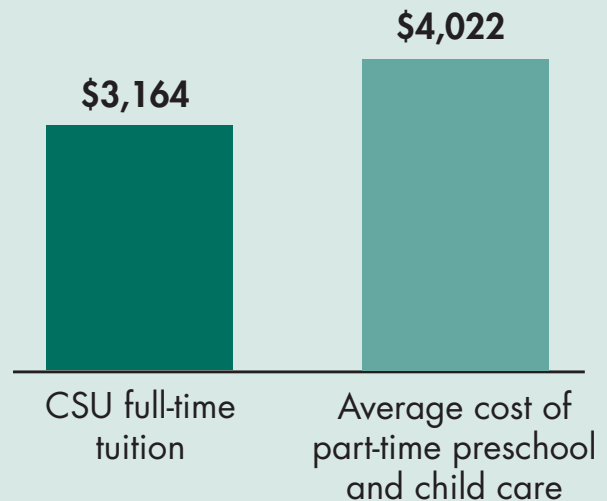
Quality preschool programs lay the foundation for children's success, providing critical academic and social skills. These benefits extend well beyond preparing young children for kindergarten. They help children succeed in school and in life and prevent future crime and violence.

However, faced with the high costs of paying for preschool on their own, too few California families can afford to enroll their children in quality preschool programs. California pays the price for quality preschool being out of reach of so many children. Without quality preschool, more children get started on the wrong track, struggle in school, drop out, and turn to crime later in life.

Part-time Private Preschool Is More Expensive than Attending a California State University

A private, part-time, center-based program for a preschool-age child costs families an average of

Part-time Private Preschool Costs More than California State University



CA Dept. of Education 2005, CA State University 2005

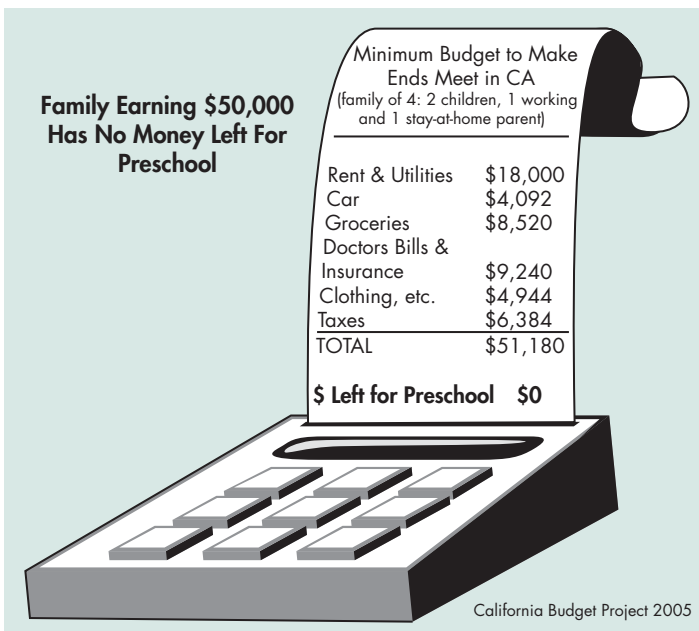
\$4,022 per year. This average includes both preschool and child care programs of varying quality.

Sending a child to a part-time private preschool costs more than the full-time cost of a California State University (CSU). CSU tuition for full-time students in 2005-2006 averages \$3,164—less than the average cost of part-time private preschool and child care in every California county.

Many families pay far more. Part-time programs in the top 15 percent of the price scale start at \$5,552 per year.

High Cost Puts Preschool Out of Reach of Low- and Middle-income Families

The high cost of preschool helps explain why most children from both low-income and middle-income families are unlikely to be enrolled in any program at all, and why very few are likely to be



enrolled in a quality preschool.

Middle-income families, earning between \$30,000 and \$60,000 in 2000, are particularly hard hit. Higher-income families are 43 percent more likely to enroll their children in preschool than middle-income families. Children from these middle-income families are almost as unlikely as low-income children to be enrolled in preschool. A family of four earning \$50,000 has no money left for preschool after taking care of its most basic needs, such as housing, food and health care.

Quality Preschool Is Even More Out of Reach Due to Higher Costs

Quality preschool costs much more than the average rate for both preschool and child care programs of mixed quality. Economists at the RAND Corporation estimate that the annual cost of providing quality part-time preschool in California is close to \$6,000 per child—over 40 percent more than the average for part-time center-based programs.

Less than 15 percent of part-time, center-based programs charge as much as RAND estimates is necessary to run a quality preschool.

California Pays the Price

Research shows that quality preschool programs help children succeed in school and avoid crime later in life.

If quality preschool were universally available in California, juvenile crime would be reduced by 19 percent, and high school dropouts would fall by 14 percent.

California must invest in making quality preschool available to all California children to prepare them for lifelong learning and to prevent future crime.

The report includes a county-by-county analysis showing (1) the average cost of part-time preschool and child care programs and the starting cost for programs in the top 15 percent of the price scale; and (2) how middle and higher-income families compare in terms of preschool enrollment.

Average Cost to Families of Part-time Private Preschool and Child Care

County	Average
MARIN	\$4,859
SANTA CLARA	\$4,700
SAN MATEO	\$4,697
SAN FRANCISCO	\$4,574
SANTA CRUZ	\$4,488
ALAMEDA	\$4,210
CONTRA COSTA	\$4,143
ORANGE	\$4,075
MONTEREY	\$4,031
STATE AVERAGE	\$4,022
SAN BENITO	\$4,004
SANTA BARBARA	\$3,984
MONO	\$3,942
VENTURA	\$3,929
SAN DIEGO	\$3,847
SONOMA	\$3,846
LOS ANGELES	\$3,783
PLACER	\$3,772
EL DORADO	\$3,741
YOLO	\$3,737
SOLANO	\$3,714
ALPINE	\$3,697
KINGS	\$3,691
NAPA	\$3,665
SACRAMENTO	\$3,566
RIVERSIDE	\$3,550
AMADOR	\$3,536
SAN BERNARDINO	\$3,524
GLENN	\$3,514
SAN JOAQUIN	\$3,509
KERN	\$3,504
STANISLAUS	\$3,480
FRESNO	\$3,478
DEL NORTE	\$3,477
YUBA	\$3,465
IMPERIAL	\$3,463
TUOLUMNE	\$3,455
MENDOCINO	\$3,450
TULARE	\$3,443
NEVADA	\$3,441
COLUSA	\$3,428
LASSEN	\$3,428
MARIPOSA	\$3,428
MERCED	\$3,428
MODOC	\$3,428
PLUMAS	\$3,428
SIERRA	\$3,428
SUTTER	\$3,428
TEHAMA	\$3,428
TRINITY	\$3,428
SAN LUIS OBISPO	\$3,428
SHASTA	\$3,427
MADERA	\$3,427
INYO	\$3,422
SISKIYOU	\$3,420
CALAVERAS	\$3,385
BUTTE	\$3,384
LAKE	\$3,382
HUMBOLDT	\$3,374

CA Dept. of Education 2005

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The full report, source citations and other research are available at www.fightcrime.org/ca
 Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California*, 414 13th Street, Ste 700, Oakland, CA, 94612, 510-836-2050.

Endnotes

Part-time Private Preschool Is More Expensive than Attending a California State University

Average cost of part-time preschool and child care and for top 15% highest-cost programs

Based on data from Randal Zu Wallack. (2006, February 3 and 13). Personal Communication. Randal Zu Wallack is an analyst with ORC Macro, which conducted the Regional Market Rate (RMR) survey for the California Department of Education. County averages were provided by: California Department of Education. (2005). "Statewide RMR for Preschoolers"

More expensive than CSU tuition

CSU 2005/06 Academic Year Resident Undergraduate Fees. Available on the California State University website: http://www.calstate.edu/budget/FeeEnrll_Info/FeeInfo/Campus_Mand_Fees/Mand_Fees_ToC.shtml.

High Cost Puts Preschool Out of Reach of Low- and Middle-Income Families

Most low and middle-income children do not attend preschool and higher-income 43 percent more likely to attend than middle-income children
California Research Bureau. (2004). Unpublished data (from 2000 Census, using 5% Public Use Microdata Sample); California Budget Project. (2005).

Family earning \$50,000 has no money left for preschool
Making Ends Meet: How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Family in California? P. 18. Retrieved from: http://www.cbp.org/2005/0509_mem.pdf.

Quality Preschool Is Even More Out of Reach Due to Higher Costs

Quality preschool costs more than average cost
Karoly, L. & Bigelow, J. (2005). *The Economics of Investing in Universal Preschool Education in California*. The RAND Corporation. P. 89. Retrieved from: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG349/>. RAND estimates the cost of quality preschool in California as \$5,704.

California Pays the Price

Universal Preschool reduces crime and high school dropouts
Karoly, L. & Bigelow, J. (2005). *The Economics of Investing in Universal Preschool Education in California*. The RAND Corporation. Retrieved from: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG349/>.

