# Child Care in Alabama

## Mothers Are Working Today

Working mothers in the United States:

- with infants under age 1 **58%**
- with children under age 6 **64%**
- with school-age children **74%**

## Child Care Is Hard To Find

**Throughout every state:**

- Families with infants and toddlers have a hard time finding child care.
- Families needing nontraditional hour care or care for a child with special needs have a hard time as well.
- Many communities have waiting lists for care.

## Alabama Child Poverty

**29.8%** Children under age 6 below poverty

**53%** Children under age 6 below 200% of poverty

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**All Children Benefit from High Quality Child Care, Low Income Children Benefit More**

## Child Care is Expensive in Alabama

The average annual cost of center-based infant care in Alabama is **$5,644**.

**10.6% of Family Income**
**28.7% for Single Mothers**

The average annual cost of home-based infant care in Alabama is **$4,807**.

**9% of Family Income**
**24.5% for Single Mothers**

**Percentages based on state median incomes and average cost of child care.*

## Quality Child Care Matters

**During the earliest years of a child's life:**

- 700-1,000 new neural connections form every second. These connections are influenced by genes and experiences.
- By 24 months, low income children are 6 months behind in skills critical to language development.
- By age 3, low income children have heard 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

### Quality Child Care Depends on a Quality Workforce

- **Wages Matter.** To attract and retain a quality workforce, early childhood educators need to earn decent wages.
- In every state, child care worker wages qualify a family of three for public aid.
- The median annual wage for a child care professional in Alabama is **$18,210**.

## It's time to invest in high quality child care.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Median Family Income for in the Past 12 Months for Families with Children Under Age 18, 2015 ACS 1 Year Estimates, Table B19125, B19126; Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months, 2015 ACS 1 Year Estimates, Table B17024; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Characteristics of Families in 2015 (April 2016), BLS Standard Occupational Code (SOC 399011, May 2015), Child Care Aware of America (2015 Child Care Costs), Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, Fernald, A., Marchman, V., and Weisleder, A., (2013). SES differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months. Developmental Science, 16 (2), 234-248, Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3" (2003).

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