

Child Care

an Important Part of American Life

Families rely on a patchwork of child care services to meet their work and family needs. Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) helps us understand child care usage among families.

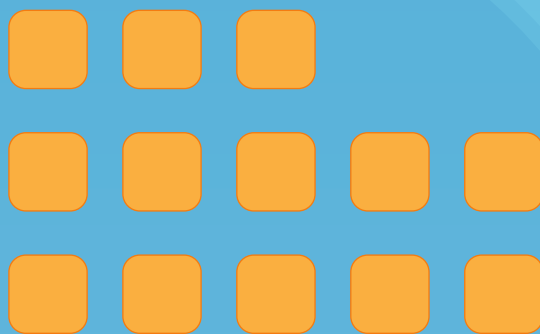
32.7
Million

Children in Care Arrangements

In 2011, 32.7 million children were in a regular child care arrangement while their parents worked or pursued other activities outside of the home.

12.5M

Preschoolers
(ages 0–4)

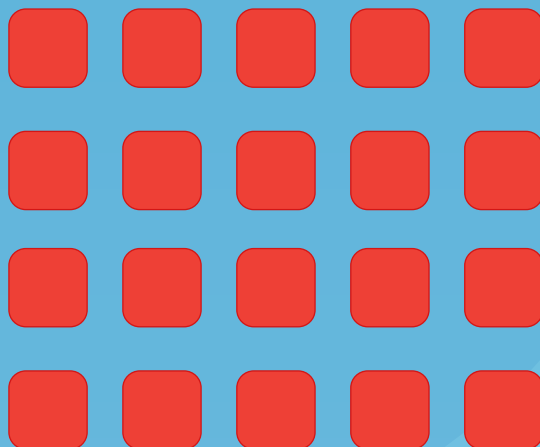


61%

A greater percentage of preschoolers participated in child care compared to grade schoolers.

20.2M

Grade Schoolers
(ages 5–14)



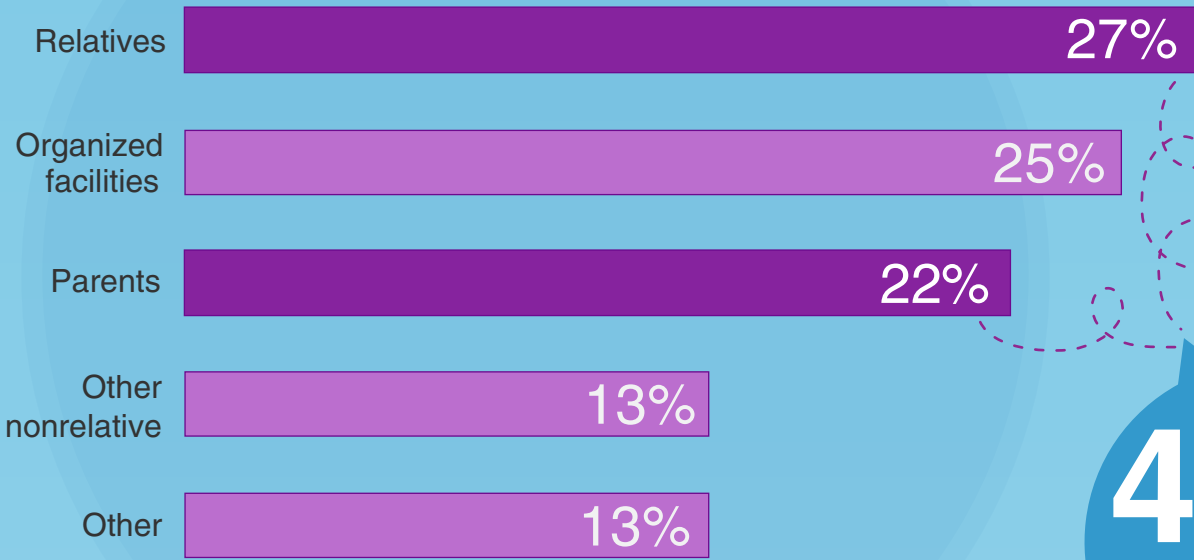
50%

Percentage of grade schoolers who participate in a regular child care arrangement.

▲ One block represents approximately one million children in a regular care arrangement.

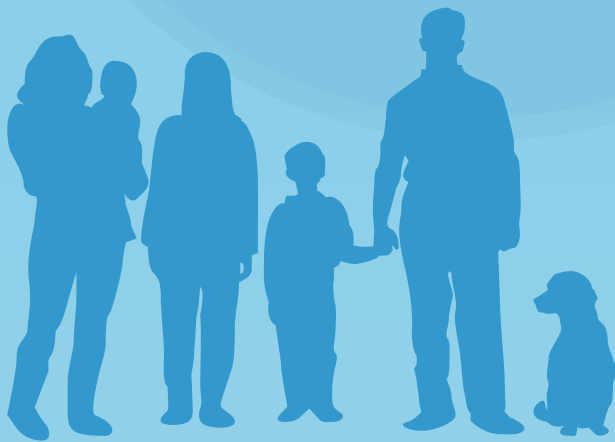
Who's Minding the Kids?

Increases in the number of working mothers and the desire to provide young children with educational opportunities have driven up the demand for various types of child care. Relatives regularly provide care for preschoolers.



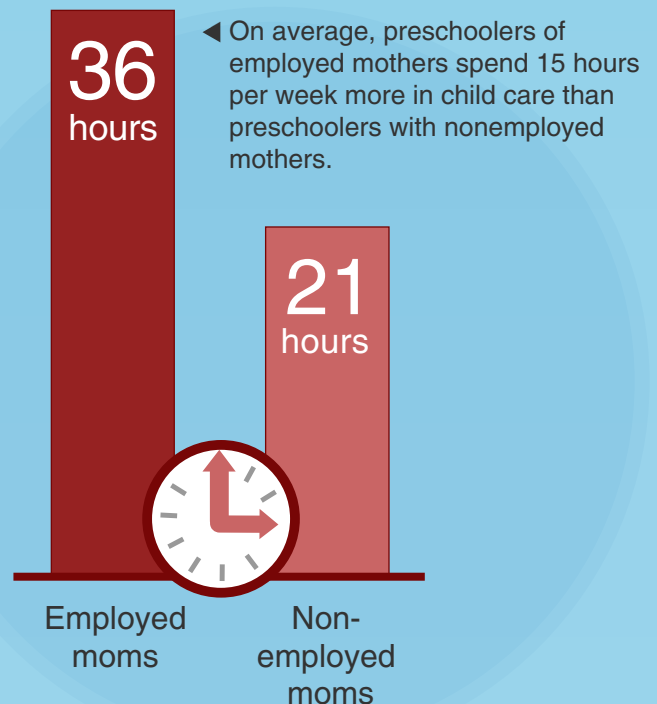
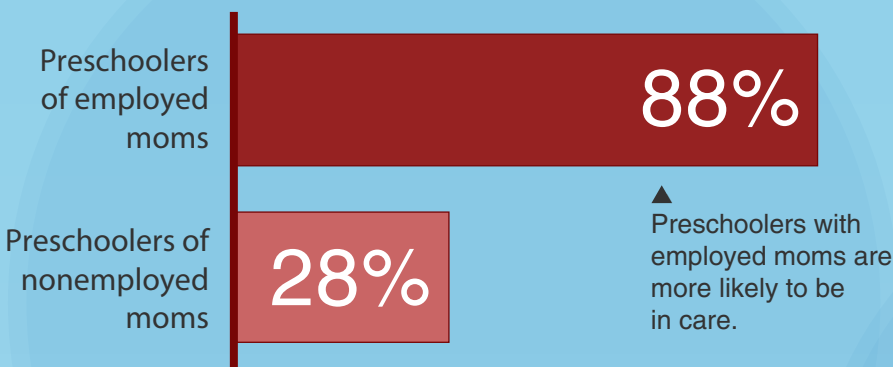
◀ One in five relatives who provided care was a grandparent.

49%
Parents and relatives make up half of all preschool child care arrangements.

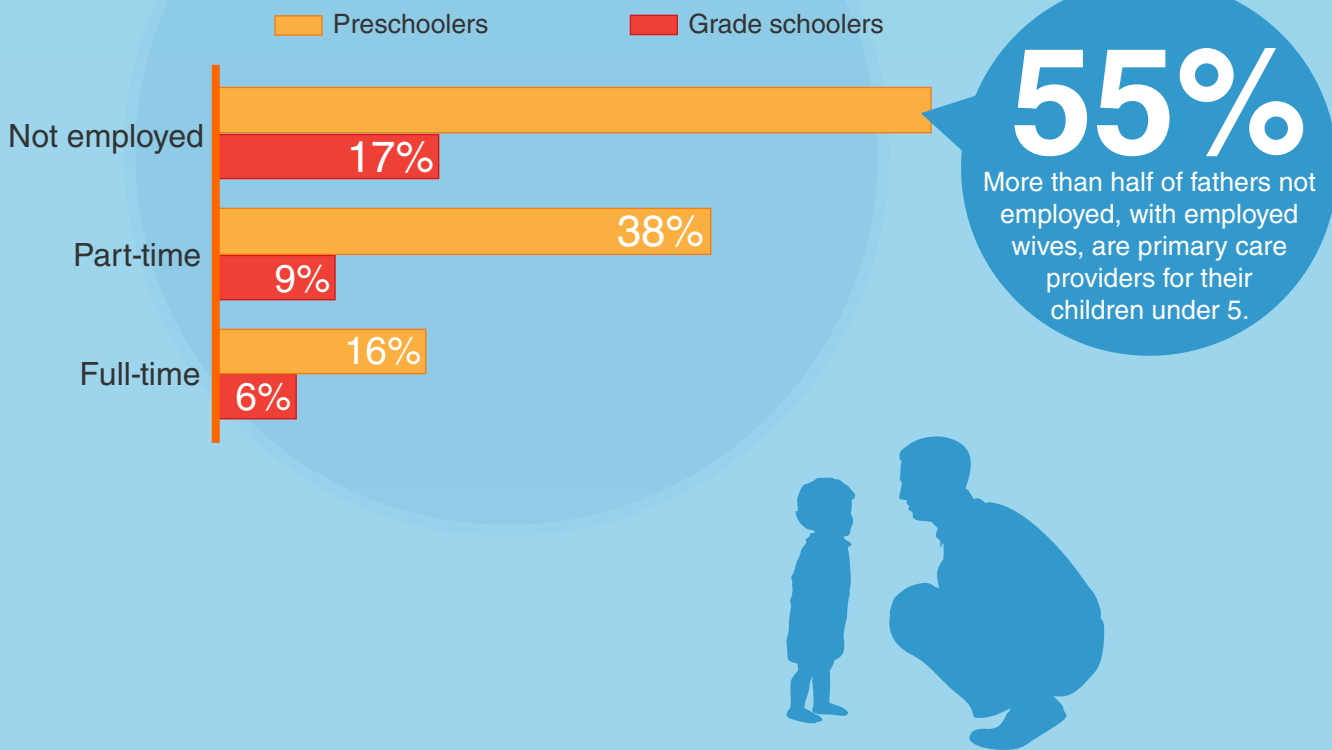


DEFINITIONS

- Relatives**—grandparents, siblings, and other relatives.
- Organized Facilities**—day care or child care centers, nursery schools, preschools, and Head Start programs.
- Parents**—fathers who provided care while the mother worked or mothers who provided care while working.
- Other nonrelative**—in-home babysitters, neighbors, friends, and family day care homes.
- Other**—school, self care, and no regular arrangement.



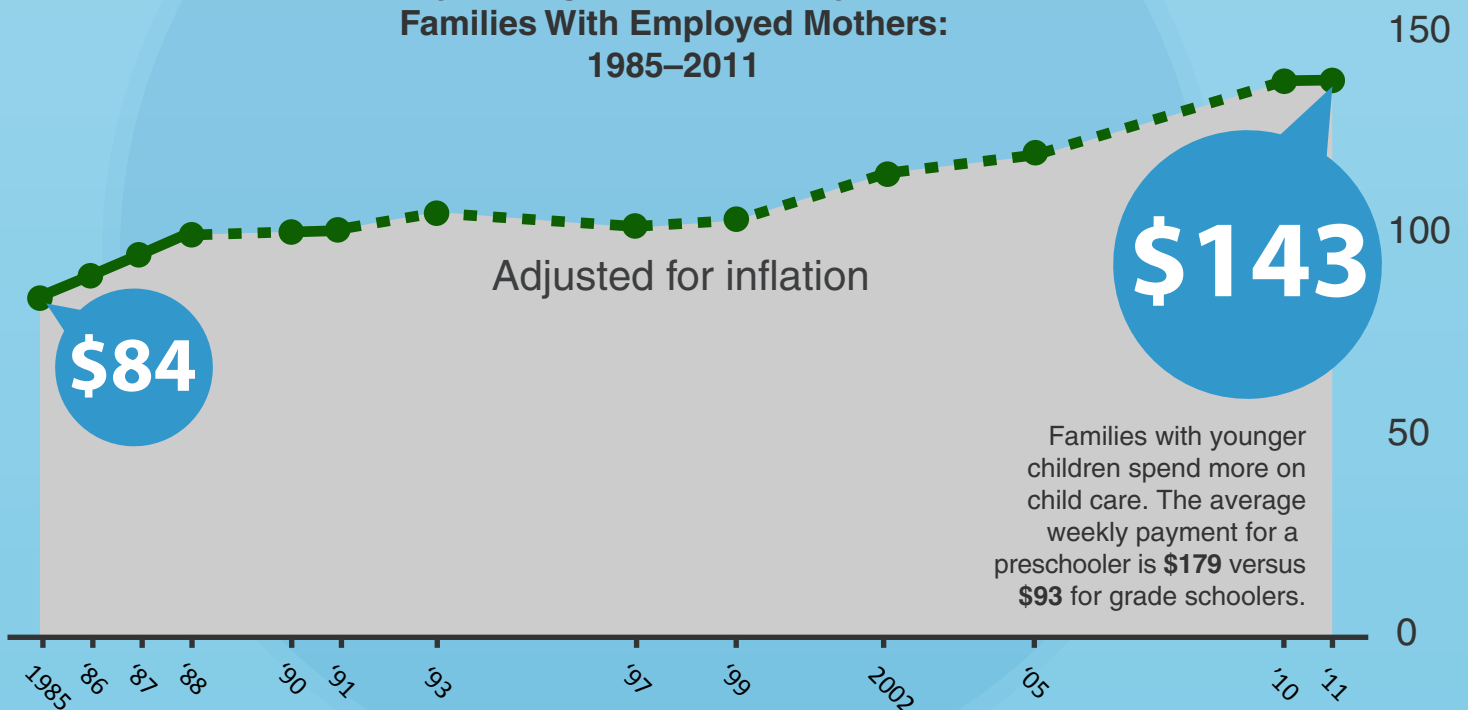
Married Fathers Are More Likely to Provide Primary Care if They Are Not Employed or Work Part-Time



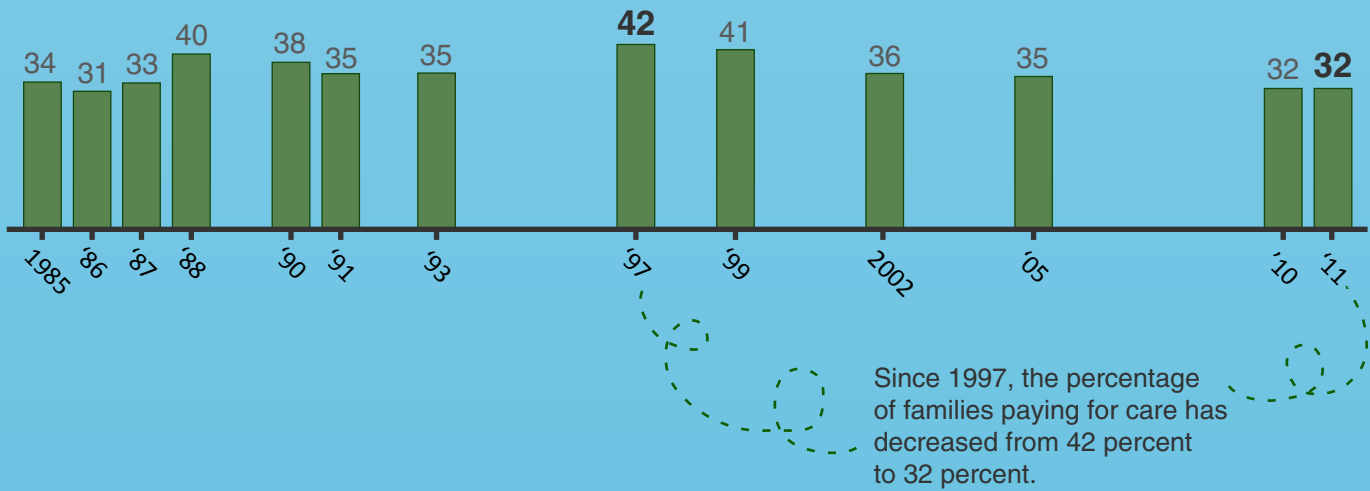
Child Care Payments

Out-of-pocket costs for child care nearly doubled in the last quarter century. However, the percentage of families paying for child care has declined since the late 1990s.

Weekly Average Child Care Payments for Families With Employed Mothers: 1985–2011



Percentage of Families With Employed Mothers Who Make Child Care Payments: 1985–2011



Families Below the Federal Poverty Line Spent Roughly Four Times the Percentage of Their Income on Child Care as Other Families

