

West Virginia Child Care Salaries Rank 47th Lowest In The Nation



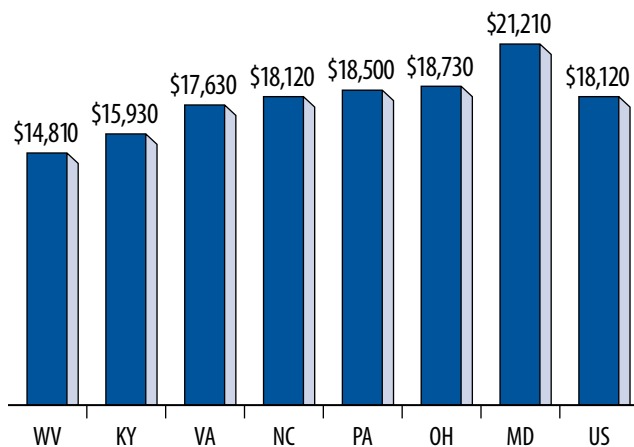
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Child care workers in West Virginia earn the lowest salaries in a seven state region and \$3,310 less than the national average. Among all 50 states and the District of Columbia, West Virginia ranks 47th in pay for child care workers. Chart 1 shows an average annual pay of \$14,810 per year for child care workers in West Virginia. West Virginia child care workers earn \$1,120 less per year than child care workers in neighboring Kentucky and \$6,400 less than workers in Maryland.

Child care workers in West Virginia generally do not have a college degree but may have education credits in child development and certification through the State Training and Registry System (STARS), a statewide system to teach core competencies in early education and development and support career mobility for child care workers.

CHART 1
Mean Child Care Worker Salaries

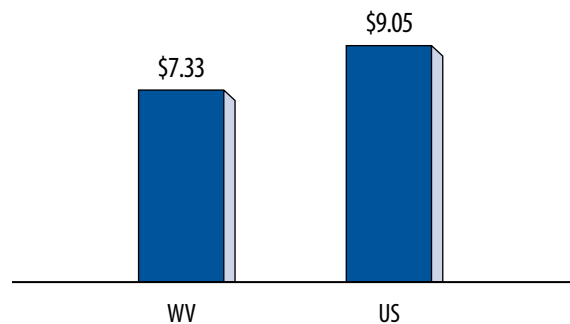


Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics; May 2006.

The research of the last decades is unequivocal. Early childhood is the most critical time in human development. The child care workers, who care for our young children, are shaping our future.

Chart 2 shows the mean hourly wage for child care workers in the U.S. is 9.05 per hour while in West Virginia the average wage is \$7.33 per hour just \$ 0.78 per hour over the minimum wage of \$6.55. About 28 percent of West Virginia's 2,080 child care workers earn at or below the minimum wage.¹ Workers with mean hourly wages comparable to child care workers include parking lot attendants (\$8.33), bell hops (\$8.83), and animal trainers (\$14.39).²

CHART 2
Mean Hourly Wage for Child Care Workers 2006



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics; May 2006.

The research of the last decades is unequivocal. Early childhood is the most critical time in human development. Half of all West Virginia children live in families where the single parent or both parents work and need some form of child care. An estimated 90,000 West Virginia children under age eight are in child care all day or for some part of the day.³ The childcare workers, who care for our young children, are shaping our future. The very low wages paid to this segment of the workforce is evidence of a sad neglect of young children in our state's public policy priorities.

End Notes

- 1 Workforce West Virginia data.
- 2 Fact Sheet, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. Information gathered by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, a project of the American Federation of Teachers, and is based on the May 2006 Occupational Employment Statistics, from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- 3 There is no count of numbers of children receiving child care services on a daily basis. We estimate that 50 percent of all children under age eight need full or part-time childcare services. In 2006, the number of children under age eight in West Virginia totaled 187,214 according to the Kids Count Data Center. Consequently we estimate that about 90,000 are in some type of out-of-home care. www.kidscountdatacenter.org accessed on September 17, 2008.

The **West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy** is a policy research organization that is nonpartisan, nonprofit, and statewide. It focuses on how policy decisions affect all West Virginians, including low- and moderate-income families, other vulnerable populations, and the important community programs that *serve them*.

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