

What it Takes: Stories from American Families



For over 50 years, Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) has been connecting parents to child care providers, strengthening families, and helping our communities thrive. Hear firsthand from families about the challenges they have faced, the resources they received through CCRC, and how their lives have been improved.

Child Care Financial Assistance

American families who need help finding and paying for child care are helped by CCRC.



The economy right now is a scary place and worrying about how our children will be taken care of should not be one of those worries. This program should absolutely stay and continue to receive funding. It's one of the few life lines that help us rebuild our lives or just continue to survive.

- Single Parent with 2 children from Rialto, CA

As a single mother of 2 little ones, child care assistance has helped me tremendously. I was able to keep my job. It helped me reduce financial burden and emotional stress because child care is very costly. The cost of living has gone up so much that it would be difficult for me to be able to cover child care without any assistance.

- Single mother living in San Bernardino

Rising Costs of Living and Economic Struggles

American families can cope with the economic struggles they face by utilizing various resources, including government assistance programs, like SNAP and WIC, seeking help from food banks and pantries, and accessing community support networks.



Over the past several years, my family has experienced significant financial challenges that have affected nearly every part of our daily lives. The rising cost of housing, groceries, child care, utilities, health care, and transportation has made it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Gas prices have become a major burden because I depend on my vehicle to get to work, take my children to school and medical appointments, buy groceries, and meet other essential needs.

There have been times when I have had to make difficult decisions about which bills to pay first or which necessities had to wait. These financial pressures create stress and uncertainty, not only for me but for my children as well.

- Single Mother with 3 children from Lancaster

As a single mother working 40 hours a week, I work hard every day to provide for my family, yet it has become increasingly difficult to make ends meet. The rising cost of living has affected every aspect of our lives. Insurance premiums continue to increase, groceries cost significantly more than they did just a few years ago, and everyday necessities like gas, utilities, and household items keep getting more expensive. Although I work full-time, it often feels like my paycheck no longer stretches far enough to cover essential expenses. Like many working parents, I do not qualify for much assistance because I am employed, yet my income is still not enough to keep up with the increasing cost of living. There are times when I have to choose between paying bills, buying groceries, or setting money aside for unexpected emergencies.

I hope policymakers recognize that many working families need continued support, not because we are unwilling to work, but because the cost of living has outpaced wages.

- Single Mother from Palmdale

Losing Public Benefits

American families cope with losing public benefits in various ways, including borrowing from family and friends, utilizing community resources, and seeking assistance from non-profits.

The recent changes to our Medi-Cal benefits and the reduction in our CalFresh benefits had a significant impact on our family. These changes created additional financial hardship, making it more difficult to provide for our household.

As a result, I had to spend more time traveling to food banks and seeking additional sources of food assistance. I have also been forced to work extra hours and pursue additional income to make ends meet.

This has taken valuable time away from my family and my children, affecting the time I am able to spend caring for and supporting them.

- Single Mother with 4 children from Big Bear

I am doing everything I can to create stability for myself and my child, but I am struggling financially and need support.

Over the past year, I have consistently applied for jobs, but I have faced challenges finding employment. Employers have required nights and weekends, which I am unable to work due to my parenting responsibilities. I currently receive CalWORKs and CalFresh, but my benefits were recently reduced after my recertification, making it even more difficult to cover basic living expenses.

- Single Parent with one child from Lancaster

Over the past several months, my family's expenses have increased significantly while the assistance we previously relied on has decreased. My SNAP benefits were reduced from approximately \$500 per month to only \$30, making it much more difficult to afford groceries. My child care was previously fully covered, but I am now responsible for \$445 per month in child care costs.

Although I work full-time, I am constantly trying to decide which essential bills to pay first. Between rent, utilities, child care, insurance, and groceries, there is very little left over. Money has become extremely tight. I am doing everything I can to provide for my daughter, but there are times when I worry about whether I can afford enough healthy, nutritious food for her.

I want to work. I want to provide for my daughter. I am doing everything I can to become financially stable, but each reduction in assistance has made it harder not easier to get ahead. Instead of moving toward stability, I often feel like I am just trying to survive.

- Single Mother with one child from Rancho Cucamonga



Health Insurance

American families access health insurance through a combination of private and public sources.



The rising cost of living in California has made it increasingly difficult to meet our family's everyday needs. Every dollar goes toward housing, food, transportation, and making sure the children in my care have a safe and stable environment.

Health coverage through Medi-Cal has been life-changing. As a disabled veteran with ongoing medical conditions, I rely on regular medical care, specialists, medications, and treatments to maintain my health. Without health insurance, my health would likely decline, making it even more difficult to care for my granddaughter and any foster children placed in my home.

Food assistance programs also help stretch our budget. The cost of groceries continues to rise, and healthy food is often the most expensive. These programs help ensure the children have nutritious meals while allowing me to direct my limited income toward rent, utilities, and other essential expenses.

- Kinship Caregiver with 3 children in Victorville

Family Stability

American families build stability through a combination of strong family dynamics, societal support systems, and financial resilience.

CCRC's support has been a lifeline for me and my four kids. Their Alternative Payment Program gave us stability when we needed it most. Knowing my babies are safe and cared for lets me breathe and focus on building a better life for them. Working full-time as a supervisor isn't easy, but it's worth it to give them the world. And now, thanks to the financial freedom CCRC helped me find, we're putting down roots in our very own home. I'm forever grateful for their help in our darkest hours.

- Single Parent with 4 children from Victorville

As a single mom living paycheck to paycheck, having reliable child care has allowed me to focus on going to work without constantly worrying about who would care for my son. Before receiving this support, I often had to call off work because I didn't have dependable child care, and I was close to losing my job.

Like many families, I also worry about being able to provide enough food and meet our basic needs. Knowing my son has a safe, nurturing place to go each day has taken away so much of that stress. My stress level has decreased, and I can work knowing he is well cared for.

My son started this program when he was just one year old, and he is now three years old. Watching him grow and thrive has been incredible. His teachers have played such an important role in his development, learning, confidence, and social skills. This program has not only supported my son—it has helped keep our family stable, allowed me to maintain my employment, and given us hope for a better future.

- Single Parent with one child from San Bernardino, CA

As a single mother of three I have had many struggles as one can imagine. However, with all the ups and downs with my job, having RELIABLE child care assistance so that I can maintain a job has been essential to our survival. As a former foster youth myself, now an adult with 3 children of my own, I have no family support. Unfortunately, the children's father is battling addiction and mental illness. I have relied heavily on this assistance to be self-sufficient and keep a job.

Please keep this program in the future for parents like me. They might not have any family support and are just trying to be providers for their families, not sitting at home doing nothing. They will be pressing for a better life for their children and themselves, being able to go to college and find an awesome productive career is the way they can do so.

- Single Mother with 3 children from Barstow (and a former foster youth)

I am a single working mother raising my four-year-old son in Los Angeles. We are a one-income household, and I do not receive child support. Although I work as a nurse and earn too much to qualify for programs such as SNAP or CalFresh, my income does not stretch far enough to comfortably cover the rapidly increasing costs of housing, health insurance, groceries, transportation, child care, and other basic necessities.

- Single Mother with one child from San Fernando Valley

The Child Care Resource Center is more than we think it is; it has many opportunities for those who want to grow in education. You can work and study at the same time. I never thought I could be part of the CCRC team. The staff they have are very professional and encourage you to keep going and never give up on your dreams and goals. I was able to be part of the Parent Policy and serve as vice president at one of the Head Start schools where my two children attended. I met many people who encouraged me to continue my education and helped me feel more confident by believing in me and putting their trust in me. Now, here I am in the apprenticeship program, and I love it. Thank you, CCRC, for this opportunity. I can't wait to receive my certificate as a Teacher Assistant.

- Married with 2 children from Van Nuys



We're all in this together - learn how each program's critical funding makes an impact on California families.



Journey of a Child Care Dollar

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program funding goes to community-based agencies to help parents access child care while they work or attend school.



Journey of a TANF Dollar

Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides cash assistance and supportive services to eligible families with children.



Journey of a Medi-Cal Dollar

Medi-Cal provides needed health care services for families with children, persons with disabilities, children in foster care, pregnant women and people with specific diseases.



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