



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

The DC Fiscal Policy Institute blog
www.dcfpi.org

February 14, 2013

Are We Shortchanging the Working Parents of Our Youngest Residents?

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Imagine your boss tells you one day that your pay will be frozen and not adjusted for the cost of living for the next ten years, but that you still will be expected to meet the demands of the job. Sounds a bit unfair, right?

Yet, that's how child care providers serving low- and moderate-income families are being treated. DC's reimbursement rates for child care providers serving eligible families were last updated in 2006 and are based on child care costs in 2004. Worse yet, even the highest-rated centers (those who rate "gold" in the city's rating system) do not receive 100 percent of the 2004 market rates. This issue was discussed at a [forum](#) held on Wednesday by Empower DC.

This means many centers and family home providers simply have to eat the extra cost not covered by reimbursement. Over time, they may be unable to maintain a high level of quality — a clean and safe environment that supports a child's development— and may force some centers to close their doors or no longer accept families using a child care subsidy.

DCFPI thinks it's time to update DC's child care reimbursement rates to match current costs of providing care. Child care centers and other providers help make sure children start school ready to learn while allowing their parents to go to work or school. As a first step, we urge the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to release the 2012 child care market rate survey and use the data to make child care more accessible for the DC residents who need it the most.