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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Cost and Context of Quality Child Care in Wisconsin: Child Care Aware Report

MADISON, WI December 16, 2015 – The recent release of the 2015 *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care* report from Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) highlights Wisconsin’s need for affordable, accessible, quality child care, and increased pay for child care providers that matches their high economic and social value.

“Quality early education matters,” said Jill Hoiting, Co-Director of Programs & External Relations at Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA). “The brain develops at its most rapid rate during the first years of life. [Studies show](#) that what happens in those earliest years is a major determining factor for a child’s success later in life. Collectively, we have to find a way to make quality early education affordable for all. It is the smart move for our communities and for Wisconsin as a whole.”

Quality early education creates a shared benefit, supporting children to grow into healthy, productive adults, and allowing their parents the autonomy to work and support their family. Yet the bulk of child care costs fall on parents. According to the Child Care Aware findings, in Wisconsin, a married family of median income with two children in center-based child care spends nearly 25% of their annual income on child care, while a married family with two children that is at the poverty line spends close to 87%.

Cost of care in urban areas, such as Milwaukee, exceeds the state average. In Milwaukee the cost of placing an infant in family child care was approximately 25% over the state average, while the cost of placing an infant in a child care center was about 18% higher. In the Midwest as a whole, the cost of child care outranked that of housing, college tuition, transportation, food and health care.

Child care costs are high, but child care providers are still grossly underpaid, with Wisconsin being one of the top ten offenders. According to CCAoA, almost 100% of a Wisconsin child care provider’s annual income is needed to place two children in child care, meaning that in our state, a child care provider may be working solely to pay for their own children’s care. The majority of child care providers [earn an hourly rate in line with a retail or fast food worker](#), despite the fact that they are in the vital position of helping to shape the minds and development of our youngest citizens.

CCAoA offers recommendations to improve the child care system that can be used nationally and statewide. The 2015 *Parents and High Cost of Child Care* report is available at <http://usa.childcareaware.org>.

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Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) is non-profit organization funded by public and private entities to support and implement a variety of early childhood focused programs and services. We cultivate a system of organizations and professionals across Wisconsin to promote quality, strengths-based, early childhood services in all communities. Learn more at supportingfamilies.together.org.

Child Care Aware of America is our nation's leading voice for child care. CCAoA works with state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and other community partners to ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable child care. To learn more, visit usa.childcareaware.org. Follow the conversation on Twitter: @USACHildCare #CostofCare