**Analysis of Childcare Prices**

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**Summary of Analysis**

**Introduction**  
The National Database of Childcare Prices offers critical insights into the affordability of childcare in the United States from 2008 to 2018. This analysis examines median and 75th percentile weekly childcare costs for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children, categorized by state and county. The research focuses on three key issues: the steady rise in childcare costs, significantly higher costs for urban families compared to their rural counterparts, and the decline in workforce participation among mothers that appears to correlate with increasing childcare expenses. These findings underscore the financial strain on families and highlight the broader economic implications of unaffordable childcare. In light of these trends, the report advocates for targeted policy interventions, including childcare subsidies, tax credits, and employer-supported childcare benefits.

**The Data**  
The analysis of overall trends in childcare costs reveals that the median weekly expense for infant care is approximately $113, while toddler care costs around $107 and preschool care about $104. As indicated by the 75th percentile, premium costs are higher—approximately $129 for infants, $121 for toddlers, and $118 for preschool-aged children. These figures indicate that infant care is the most expensive category, placing a disproportionate financial burden on families with younger children.

Yearly trends show that childcare costs have consistently increased over the decade, with median infant care costs rising by nearly 25%. This trend is particularly pronounced in urban areas, where some families report paying over $150 per week per child. Regional variations further complicate the landscape; for instance, families in states such as California and New York face some of the highest childcare expenses, whereas rural families benefit from significantly lower costs—often around $40 per week. However, the lower costs in rural regions are tempered by limited access to high-quality childcare services. Moreover, states that have implemented robust childcare subsidies tend to exhibit lower cost burdens, while others experience widening gaps in affordability.

The economic impact of these rising childcare costs is profound. On average, families spend approximately 25% of their household income on childcare, severely restricting budgets for housing, food, and savings. This financial pressure disproportionately affects mothers, many of whom are forced to exit the workforce, thereby exacerbating economic disparities. Comparative analyses suggest that countries with stronger childcare policies enjoy higher workforce participation rates among women and better overall financial outcomes.

Several assumptions were made when conducting this analysis. Missing data points were excluded under the assumption that they would not significantly alter the observed trends. The 75th percentile values were presumed to represent premium childcare costs accurately, and regional cost variations were used as a proxy for assessing the effectiveness of local childcare policies. However, several items require further clarification: the accuracy of extreme outliers (with weekly costs exceeding $400), whether the dataset explicitly distinguishes between urban and rural counties or if such distinctions are inferred, and the potential integration of additional policy-related data, such as comparisons between states with and without childcare subsidies.

**The Purpose**

The direction of this project is firmly rooted in advocacy for policy change. Using data-driven evidence, the analysis makes a compelling case for viewing childcare affordability as an economic issue rather than merely a family concern. The key policy focus is supporting Bill 32, the Childcare Affordability Act, which proposes expanding childcare subsidies and employer tax incentives. The primary audience for this work is policymakers and government officials who have the authority to implement systemic changes. By presenting the analysis in a structured and data-driven format, the project aims to equip decision-makers with actionable insights.

**The Mediums**

Three distinct mediums were employed to communicate these findings effectively. The first is a PowerPoint dashboard that provides a high-level, visual summary of childcare cost trends and regional disparities. This medium uses key visuals, including line graphs, bar charts, and pie charts, to succinctly convey the data. The second medium is a blog post formatted as a persuasive policy narrative. This document combines storytelling with statistical evidence to highlight the real-world impacts of high childcare costs and offers a strong call to action to "Vote YES on Bill 32." The third medium is a detailed PowerPoint presentation designed as a structured legislative argument. This presentation methodically walks policymakers through the issue, its economic impacts, and potential policy solutions.

Principles of clarity and professionalism guided design decisions across these mediums. A blue and white color scheme was chosen to evoke trust and reliability, while grey tones were used to ensure that secondary data did not detract from the primary trends. Applying Gestalt principles—specifically proximity and contrast—helped group related data and emphasize key statistics. Annotated charts were also used to facilitate quick comprehension of complex data sets.

**Ethical Guidelines**

Ethical considerations were central to the data analysis process. Outliers, such as weekly costs exceeding $400, were flagged for further investigation but not removed, and missing data points were excluded to prevent distortions. All data were sourced from a public national database, ensuring compliance with ethical research practices. Recognizing the potential risk of visual bias, the analysis was carefully worded in a neutral, fact-based manner to minimize any unintended influence on interpretation.

Throughout the course of this project, several lessons were learned. Future analyses would benefit from integrating more policy-specific data, such as detailed state-level childcare subsidy information, to correlate cost reductions with effective policy interventions better. Additionally, enhancing the interactivity of the dashboard using advanced tools like Tableau or Power BI could further improve data visualization and bolster the findings' persuasive impact. Overall, the most rewarding aspect of the project was translating raw statistical data into a compelling narrative that underscores the urgent need for affordable childcare solutions.

**Conclusion**  
In summary, this project has illuminated the critical challenges posed by rising childcare costs in the United States. The data clearly indicate that childcare expenses have increased substantially over the past decade, disproportionately burdening urban families and contributing to a decline in workforce participation, particularly among mothers. By employing a multi-medium approach that combines rigorous data analysis with persuasive storytelling, the project makes a compelling case for policy interventions, notably the support of Bill 32: The Childcare Affordability Act. Ultimately, this analysis serves as a call to action for policymakers to implement meaningful reforms to alleviate the economic strain on families and promote a healthier, more inclusive workforce.