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As early as the 1970s, American colleges and universities began to recognize onsite childcare centers as vital to the productivity of their faculty and staff, and, more recently, as an important way to draw women faculty.[[1]](#footnote-1) Today, with more than two-thirds of the American professorate in marriages in which both partners are employed, daycare centers have grown to be common features on the campuses of colleges and universities. [[2]](#footnote-2) Indeed, a 2013 study by Johns Hopkins University faculty members revealed that, of the top 50 research universities (as ranked by *U.S. News and World Report*), 45 offered onsite childcare centers.[[3]](#footnote-3) Having successfully integrated daycare onto their campuses, many institutions have now come to recognize that the cost of tuition renders childcare centers far beyond the reach of most employees. As such, some institutions have begun to offer subsidy programs and financial assistance.

This report examines how 15 of the top research universities in the United States have addressed the cost of their onsite childcare centers. All prestigious, these institutions compete for faculty. However, they represent a wide range of endowments, which influence the generosity of childcare subsidy programs. The institutions examined in this report include Brown University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Michigan, Northwestern University, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Stanford University, and Yale University. A summary of childcare subsidy programs at Johns Hopkins University is first provided, followed by an overview of how the 15 universities addressed the cost of childcare tuition and a summary of how each has structured its financial assistance programs. Finally, a conclusion will place childcare subsidies at Johns Hopkins within the context of its peer institutions.

Childcare Subsidies at Johns Hopkins University

This August, Johns Hopkins will join 45 of its peer institutions as it opens a childcare center on the Homewood campus.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Homewood Early Learning Center will offer its tuition, paid by the month, at market-rate ($1820 for infants and toddlers enrolled full-time, $1583 for two-year-olds, and $1380 for preschoolers).[[5]](#footnote-5) To help its affiliates afford childcare and other dependent care, the University offers full-time faculty and staff with annual household incomes below $50,000 a grant of $5,000. This grant can be applied to any licensed care facility, including the Homewood Early Learning Center.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Overview of Findings

Of the 15 research universities examined, 13 directly offer some form of financial assistance to help affiliates afford childcare services, at either onsite centers or area providers with which the institutions are affiliated. How each of the institutions structures this financial assistance, and to whom it offers this assistance, varies. A vast majority offer childcare subsidies in the form of grants (the generosity of these grants varies widely across institutions, from a maximum of $2,000 at Columbia to up to $20,000 at Stanford), while only Penn and Dartmouth provide scaled tuition at their onsite centers. Of the institutions that offer subsidies in the form of grants, most require that recipients be benefits-eligible employees who work full-time. (Only MIT and Stanford explicitly state that affiliates are required to work only part-time in order to receive the subsidy.) Income eligibility requirements range as well. At Stanford, a faculty member with an income equal to $199,999 is eligible for assistance, while at Duke, the maximum income to qualify for assistance is $75,000. At five of the universities, graduate students who meet all other requirements may qualify for financial assistance; Penn, for example, offers its Ph.D. students a subsidy program separate from its scaled-tuition system extended to all other affiliates, while Berkeley provides financial assistance exclusively to its students, both undergraduate and graduate. Finally, both Harvard and Stanford offer two separate subsidy programs: one to benefits-eligible employees, and another to faculty whose incomes fall below a certain range. In both cases, the latter program is far more generous, providing up to $20,000 in subsidies.

Brown University

While Brown does not host an onsite childcare center, it maintains relationships with four area providers, which reserve slots for University affiliates.[[7]](#footnote-7) Brown offers a subsidy of up to $4,000 for those affiliates whose household income is less than $100,000 and who have dependents between the ages of zero and six. Affiliates eligible for the subsidy include faculty, non-union staff, Dining Services union employees, postdoctoral research associates and fellows, graduate students, and medical students.[[8]](#footnote-8)

University of California, Berkeley

A public institution, Berkeley offers a university-sponsored childcare subsidy to its students, whose eligibility is determined by the California Department of Education. The subsidy, which applies to the onsite childcare centers, reduces the daily rate to between $0 and $19.20 depending on household size and income. In order to qualify, students must have a child between the ages of three months and five years. At least one parent must be a registered Berkeley student, and the other must be employed, in school working toward a profession, incapacitated due to mental or physical illness, or homeless and actively seeking housing.[[9]](#footnote-9)

University of Chicago

U. Chicago, which maintains two onsite childcare centers, offers no form of financial assistance to its affiliates.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Columbia University

Columbia provides financial assistance to each of its affiliated childcare centers, some of which is used to provide tuition subsidies. In addition, the University offers benefits-eligible employees with household incomes below $115,000 a grant of up to $2,000.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Cornell University

Cornell offers a subsidy of up to $5,000 per year to its benefits-eligible faculty and staff, which can be applied either to its onsite childcare center or to area providers. Recipients must have household incomes below $150,000, and must be unmarried or have a spouse who is employed, a full-time student, incapacitated due to mental or physical illness, or unemployed and actively seeking work. The child must be under age 13.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Dartmouth College

Dartmouth offers sliding-scale tuition at its onsite childcare center. Parents with household incomes above $120,000 pay full tuition, while those who earn below $35,000 are responsible for 37 percent.[[13]](#footnote-13) The share of tuition increases with household income. Table 1 displays the entire tuition schedule.

Duke University

Employees in benefits-eligible positions who work at least 30 hours per week and earn household incomes below $75,000 may be eligible for the Duke Child Care Tuition Subsidy. To qualify, children must already be enrolled in one of two onsite childcare centers, and parents must be single or reside in households in which both partners are full-time students or workers, or one has a disability. The subsidy only supports one child per family at a time.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Harvard University

Harvard offers childcare scholarships to financially needy employees in benefits-eligible positions. How much employees receive in assistance depends largely on household income, and awards range from “several hundred to several thousand dollars.” The scholarship is offered on a reimbursement basis after parents have paid childcare tuition, and the University advises that families “think of child care scholarships as helping to defray costs that they would be prepared to pay for regardless of an award.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Harvard offers an additional scholarship program for its ladder-ranked faculty with children under the age of six. This program provides families with awards between $5,000 and $20,000. To qualify, faculty must have a household income under $175,000.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MIT offers scholarships to benefits-eligible employees, which can be applied to any of eight onsite childcare centers. To qualify, employees must work at least 17.5 hours per week at MIT and have a household income below $130,000. The projected amount that the subsidy provides depends on a number of factors, including financial need, which is calculated by subtracting the expected contribution for each family from the cost of tuition, the number of days per week the child is enrolled, and the availability of funds. Employees with household incomes below $40,000 are expected to contribute a minimum of 17 percent of tuition for one child, 14.45 percent for two children, and 12.28 percent for three. On the other end of the income spectrum, those who make above $130,000 contribute a minimum of 19.25 percent for one child, 16.36 percent for two children, and 13.91 percent for three. The minimum contribution does not necessarily reflect the percent of tuition a family will pay, but rather helps to assess the degree to which a family needs tuition assistance.[[17]](#footnote-17)

University of Michigan

U. Michigan offers two subsidy programs to help affiliates pay for childcare. The Child Care Tuition Grant, funded by the Office of the Provost, helps eligible faculty, staff, and students pay for childcare at one of the three onsite childcare centers on the Ann Arbor campus. The Grant administers assistance based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Income Limits for Washtenaw County. For affiliates with household incomes under 80 percent of the Washtenaw County median income, the Grant covered seven percent of the cost of tuition in last fall. Those with incomes under 50 percent of the median income received discounts of ten percent, and those who earn 30 percent of the median income received tuition reductions of 20 percent. The discount ranges each semester.[[18]](#footnote-18) Undergraduates and graduate students may be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy, which can be applied to any state-licensed childcare center and the campus providers. This academic year, the Subsidy offers up to $4,860 per year for one child, up to $7,128 for two children, and up to $9,380 for three or more children, based on family income and financial need. In order to qualify, students must either be single or have a partner who is either fully employed or a full-time student.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Northwestern University

The Fee Assistance Program helps fulltime faculty, staff, undergraduates and graduate students afford tuition at three of the five onsite childcare centers. To qualify, affiliates must earn a household income of $100,000 or less, and must have children who are enrolled in one of the childcare centers full-time.[[20]](#footnote-20) The subsidies provide between 15 and 35 percent of the cost of tuition.[[21]](#footnote-21)

University of Pennsylvania

Penn offers a discount to University staff at its onsite childcare center, and provides further tuition reductions to staff with household incomes below $65,000 and $55,000, as shown in Table 2.[[22]](#footnote-22) It is important to note that the fees shown in Table 2 are weekly fees. In addition, the University offers Ph.D. students with household incomes below $45,000 with one child and $55,000 with two or more children an additional subsidy, which ranges between $500 and $4,000 per year. To qualify, Ph.D. students must have a child who is younger than twelve or is disabled.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Princeton University

Benefits-eligible faculty and staff may qualify for the Employee Child Care Assistance Program, which offers up to $5,000 (with an additional $1,000 for a second child) and can be applied to a wide range of childcare services, including the two onsite providers.[[24]](#footnote-24) Recipients must earn a household income equal to or below $130,000 and have a child who is pre-kindergarten age. In addition, recipients must be unmarried or have a partner who is either employed at least part-time, unemployed and actively seeking work, a full-time student, or disabled.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Stanford University

Stanford offers two subsidy programs to help selected affiliates afford childcare, which can be applied to a wide range of services, including the eight onsite centers. The Child Care Subsidy Grant provides benefits-eligible faculty and staff with household incomes below $124,999 subsidies up to $5,000. To qualify, employees must work at least part-time, and have a partner who is either employed at least part-time, a full-time student, or disabled. Those with household incomes equal to or below $54,999 are awarded $5,000, while those who earn between $55,000 and $89,999 are provided with $3,500 grants. Employees who earn between $90,000 and $124,999 are eligible for subsidies of $2,000.[[26]](#footnote-26) Stanford also offers the Faculty Child Care Assistance Program, for which faculty with household incomes equal to or below $199,999 may qualify. Eligible faculty members include full-time assistant, associate, and full professors in the tenure, non-tenure and Medical Center Lines, and must have children age five or younger. This subsidy program provides grants between $5,000 and $20,000 depending on household income, as shown in Table 3.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Yale University

While Yale is affiliated with seven area providers, it does not offer a childcare center of its own. Yale provides no subsidy or tuition assistance to its affiliates, although some of the independent providers offer financial aid.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Conclusion

With the exception of the two universities that provide no financial assistance to affiliates, Johns Hopkins stands behind its peer institutions with respect to how it addresses childcare tuition assistance. While Johns Hopkins is on par with most institutions in that it offers tuition assistance only to full-time faculty and staff, four provide financial assistance also to graduate students, and two extend their programs to part-time employees. Like Cornell, Princeton, and Stanford, Johns Hopkins offers a $5,000 grant to eligible faculty and staff—an award that is very common across these institutions. However, at Johns Hopkins, to earn the grant, an employee most earn equal to or less than $50,000, while at Stanford, this grant is granted to faculty members with household incomes between $175,000 and 199,000. At Cornell and Princeton, employees eligible for the subsidy must earn a household income below $150,000 and $130,000, respectively. It is true that, between these institutions, there exists a large disparity in endowments. But Brown, whose endowment is comparable to that of Johns Hopkins, has established a subsidy program for which household income eligibility requirements is double that of Johns Hopkins. And Dartmouth, which also has a relatively small endowment, has implemented a scaled-tuition system that helps to place it within the reach of lower-income employees.

Figure 1: Maximum Household Income for Subsidy/Tuition Assistance Programs

Table 1: Dartmouth College Child Care Center Tuition Schedule (Monthly Fees)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Household Income | Infants | Toddler I | Toddler II | Preschool I | Preschool II + III |
| <35,000 | 714 | 679 | 643 | 600 | 586 |
| 35,000-40,000 | 795 | 755 | 715 | 668 | 651 |
| 40,001-45,000 | 897 | 852 | 807 | 754 | 735 |
| 45,001-50,000 | 1,010 | 960 | 910 | 849 | 829 |
| 50,001 -60,000 | 1,135 | 1,078 | 1,021 | 954 | 930 |
| 60,001-70,000 | 1,254 | 1,191 | 1,128 | 1,053 | 1,028 |
| 70,001-80,000 | 1,373 | 1,305 | 1,237 | 1,154 | 1,126 |
| 80,001-90,000 | 1,503 | 1,430 | 1,357 | 1,264 | 1,226 |
| 90,001-100,000 | 1,638 | 1,559 | 1,479 | 1,378 | 1,329 |
| 100,001-110,000 | 1,781 | 1,693 | 1,604 | 1,496 | 1,436 |
| 110,001-120,000 | 1,850 | 1,758 | 1,666 | 1,555 | 1,482 |
| >120,000 | 1,914 | 1,818 | 1,722 | 1,608 | 1,544 |

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dcccc/fee/>.

Table 2: Penn Children's Center Tuition Schedule (Weekly Fees)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Penn Rate** | **Regular Rate** | **Assisted A (<$55,000)** | **Assisted B (<$65,000)** |
| **Infants** |  |  |  |  |
|
| 5 Days | $419.00 | $482.00 | $252.00 | $304.00 |
| 4 Days | $375.00 | $431.00 | $225.00 | $269.00 |
| 3 Days | $315.00 | $362.00 | $189.00 | $226.00 |
| 2 Days | $220.00 | $253.00 | $132.00 | $158.00 |
| **Toddlers** |  |  |  |  |
|
| 5 Days | $390.00 | $449.00 | $234.00 | $285.00 |
| 4 Days | $343.00 | $394.00 | $206.00 | $250.00 |
| 3 Days | $284.00 | $327.00 | $171.00 | $207.00 |
| 2 Days | $198.00 | $227.00 | $119.00 | $144.00 |
| **Pre-school** |  |  |  |  |
|
| 5 Days | $315.00 | $362.00 | $190.00 | $230.00 |
| 4 Days | $275.00 | $316.00 | $166.00 | $200.00 |
| 3 Days | $240.00 | $276.00 | $144.00 | $175.00 |
| 2 Days | $173.00 | $199.00 | $103.00 | $126.00 |

<http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/childcare/tuition-and-enrollment/enrollment-information/20-tuition.html>

Table 3: Stanford Faculty Child Care Assistance Program Grant Schedule

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Household Income | <$109,999 | $110,000 -$129,999 | $130,000-$149,999 | $150,000-$174,999 | $175,000-$199,999 |
| Award | $20,000 | $15,000 | $10,000 | $7,000 | $5,000 |

<https://worklife.stanford.edu/programs/financial-programs/faculty-child-care-assistance-program>

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2. Londa Schiebinger, Andrea Davies Henderson and Shannon K. Gilmartin, *Dual-Career Academic Couples: What Universities Need to Know*. Palo Alto: Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research (2008): 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
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11. Carol Hoffman, Director of Work/Life, Columbia University. Phone call to author. March 2, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. “Cornell Child Care Grant for Faculty and Staff: Frequently Asked Questions,” accessed February 22, 2015, https://www.hr.cornell.edu/life/support/ccgsp\_faq.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. “Dartmouth College Child Care Center: Fee Schedule,” accessed February 23, 2015, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dcccc/fee/. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
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19. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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