

Child care

Continued from Page 1A

ing when it's so expensive to run, yet what parents can pay doesn't cover the cost of actually running that care."

The best 'within our grasp'

After Angela's leave ended, she and Alex began staggering their work schedules. She would start early in the morning. He would start later in the day. Family members alternate days babysitting to fill in the gaps.

"Our family and friends have been super supportive, and we couldn't do it at all without them," she said.

They know they are not the only ones frustrated with the cost and availability of quality care. Of their friends, they are the only family with both parents working.

The schedule leaves them busy and apart for most of the day, but the couple agrees it helps them communicate better and work as a team.

"It can be hard to find time together as a couple," Angela said. "Because I work early, I go to bed early, so by the time my husband gets home we might have a couple of hours together as a family in the evening, including maybe an hour together alone if we can get the baby to bed on time."

When he works a night shift, she doesn't see him at all.

"It can be stressful, but we both want what is best for our family and this is the best we currently have within our grasp," Angela said.

Their experience has made Angela passionate about advocating for paid leave for both parents. She sees her European co-workers struggling less with balancing work and family because they have more support and paid leave.

"In my opinion, the U.S. is very behind on the times," she said. "I think we are heading in the right direction, but we still have a long way to go."

The in-betweens

Mariah Dietz spent years as a stay-at-home mom.

When she and her now-ex-husband bought a house in West Salem, she got a job with the state to help with bills and insurance. Day care cost her \$2,500 a month in the summertime for her three children. But after insurance, taxes and union dues, she was only bringing home about \$1,600 each month.

They soon began using some of her husband's pay to cover the gap.

Dietz considered them lower middle class, but their income put them in an in-between area: They made too much to qualify for DHS child care subsidies yet they made too little to pay for it on their own.

"That's when we decided to have me go back to staying at home with the kiddos," she said.

Still, the financial stress weighed heavily on their marriage. A year later, Dietz and her husband divorced.

Now a single mom, Dietz went back to work as a bookkeeper. She qualified for assistance through DHS but had to cover the \$300 co-pay for her two youngest children to attend day care.

The help is precarious, she said. If she gets child support or loses her job, she loses the assistance. The latter happened just a few weeks ago.

Dietz said after both her daughters got strep throat — one after the other — she missed two weeks of work and was laid off.

"In a day care facility, if your kids are sick, then you can't go to work," she said.

It starts a cycle, she said. And for jobs with no paid sick leave or strict time off policies, that cycle can mean losing your job.

Many families choose to have one of the parents, usually the mother, stay home because of the stress and cost, she said. Their careers are put on pause, and the stay-at-home parents babysit or resort to direct sales.

"I know Oregon has one of the highest child care costs in our nation but our pay isn't comparable," Dietz said. "It's such a struggle. I'm well-educated, I have college degrees, but especially in our area, a lot of employers don't pay (enough)."

Sex abuse and safety

For Dietz, the single mom with three kids, the fear of abuse at child care turned into reality. One of her children was abused at a licensed home day care.

She learned of the abuse a year after it happened, and law enforcement told her due to the level of detail her daughter was able to provide — which is typical for a very young child — they were unable to move forward with prosecution.

She'll never trust home-based care again.

Dietz switched to a child care center, figuring with more staff and structure, her children would be safer. It's more expensive, but she said it's worth the trade-off.

Recent sex abuse investigations involving babysitters, unlicensed day cares and licensed facilities in the Salem area have many parents concerned.

In 2018, 55-year-old Jeffrey Rauch



Mariah Dietz with her daughters, Lauren, 6, and Juliette, 5, outside their apartment complex in Salem on July 18, 2019. Dietz, a single mom, was fired after taking too much time off work when her daughters got sick. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL



Angela Tipton and Alex Tipton hold their son, Ares, at their home in west Salem on July 17, 2019. MICHAELA ROMÁN / STATESMAN JOURNAL

was sentenced to 31 years in prison for sexually abusing two girls at an unlicensed Salem day care run by his wife.

The same year, Quynlyn Harden, 25, was accused of sexually abusing five children at a licensed day care owned by his mother, Ceola Harden. Her license for Stinky Feet Childcare in Independence was revoked after the abuse allegations surfaced.

A complaint filed with the Office of Child Care accused Ceola Harden of allowing her son, who never underwent a background check with the central registry, to have unfettered access to the children in her care.

According to the complaint, a partner agency confirmed Harden knew about her son's inappropriate behavior and told the child victim, "It's okay. I'll take care of it. Don't tell your mom."

And just last month, William Gibbens, 36, of Salem, was sentenced to 25 years in prison for sexually abusing and sodomizing a 5-year-old girl he was babysitting.

According to court records, the abuse occurred when Gibben's wife, who was the day nanny for the girl and her two siblings, left the children in his care.

Gibbens, a convicted felon, was previously convicted of unlawful use of a weapon and unlawful possession of a destructive device.

After Gibben's arrest, prosecutors said three more children disclosed being abused by him.

Some believe the higher rates of sex crimes in Marion County — Salem has almost twice as many sex crimes reported per capita as Portland — can be attributed in part to the lack of affordable day care options, allowing predators easier access to children.

During a 2018 interview with the Statesman Journal, Salem police Detective Scotty Nowning said a majority of the sex crimes that he investigates involve nonrelated persons abusing children under their watch.

Parents often leave their children with people they shouldn't because they can't afford proper child care, Nowning said.

"Here is a seemingly good-natured person willing to watch their kids, but that person is actually someone who offends against them," he said. "We see that a lot."

Who's in charge?

The Office of Child Care, the agency tasked with inspecting child care facilities, has eight licensing specialists and two investigative specialists that cover the Salem area.

The inspectors conduct announced and unannounced visits and will conduct additional unannounced visits if they received a complaint.

During the visits, inspectors make sure every child is supervised, staff has undergone background checks, safe sleeping and eating practices are enforced and records for training, staff and each child are maintained.

The number of reports of illegal providers statewide spiked last year at 115. Only 74 were reported in 2017. And as of May 30, 53 unlicensed and licensed providers were reported to be providing illegal child care in Oregon.

Child care complaints, which have been on an upward trend since 2014, also hit a record high in 2018 at 1,801.

Melanie Mesaros, the spokeswoman for the Early Learning Division, said parents can request inspection reports from the facility or from the Office of Child Care. Inspection information will soon be available online through the

Child Care Safety Portal.

Information on fatalities and serious injuries are available online oregonearlylearning.com.

"Over the past two years, directives from Early Learning System Director Miriam Calderon and Governor Kate Brown have led to improvements to strengthen Oregon's child care licensing system," Mesaros said.

The Early Learning Division has been given more authority from the Legislature to investigate facilities and increase penalties for those providing illegal care, and the agency increased its number of field staff who and they are doing more unannounced inspections, she said.

The 'crisis' goes to the Capitol

Proponents of affordable, safe child care took the fight to the Oregon Capitol this legislative session, working to pass about 10 bills targeting the availability, cost and safety of care.

Some, like HB 2024, which will create additional infant and toddler care under the program "Baby Promise," passed handily through both chambers.

Others, like a proposed bill seeking to reduce co-pays for Oregon's child care assistance programs, died in committee. Rep. Karin Power, D-Milwaukie, who testified in favor of the bill, said the program has one of the highest co-pays in the nation.

A parent testified in favor of the bill

The Statesman Journal found

All 36 Oregon counties are considered child care deserts by national standards because of the limited number of day care spaces available.

■ Children outnumber regulated child care slots by more than 3 to 1.

■ Only 8% of infants and toddlers in Marion County have access to a child care slot.

■ Tuition rates for most infant and toddler care have more than doubled since the 1990s.

■ Statewide, the number of regulated child care slots has declined by about 5,500 since 1999.

■ Reports of illegal child care facilities are on the rise.

Coming Wednesday: *Paying for child care isn't the only problem Oregon parents face. Just finding an opening can be a huge hurdle.*

said her co-payment skyrocketed to \$1,200 a month after she received a \$0.60 raise and a bonus. Her provider, knowing she couldn't afford the new payment, ended their care and had her daughter's things ready at pick-up time.

Power, one of the few legislators with a young child in day care, backed several care-related bills, including one establishing a task force to study the access of to quality, affordable child care.

"We know that the current system doesn't work — for families, for child care providers or to support the workforce and business planning that employers need," she said during testimony.

Another bill gave the Early Learning Division of the Oregon Department of Education more investigatory tools and more power to hold child care providers accountable for safety lapses and abuse. The bill passed unanimously in both houses.

Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, who carried the bill on the Senate floor, said it would help hold facilities to the highest safety standards.

"When parents drop their children off at a child care facility regulated by the state, they should be confident their children will be safe and nurtured," Gelser said.

For questions, comments and news tips, email reporter Whitney Woodworth at wmwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com, call 503-399-6884 or follow on Twitter @wmwoodworth



www.edwardjones.com
Member SIPC

Edward Jones

MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

LOCAL ADVISORS

Salem Area

Vin Searles

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Mission | 503-363-0445

Garry Falor CFP®

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
West | 503-588-5426

Tyson Wooters

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
South | 503-362-5439

Michael Wooters

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
South | 503-362-5439

Chip Hutchings

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Lancaster | 503-585-4689

Cameron Hunt CFA, CFP®

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
West | 503-588-5426

Caitlin Davis CFP®

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
West | 503-585-1464

Tim Sparks

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Commercial | 503-370-6159

Matthew Guyette

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Mission | 503-363-0445

Jeff Davis

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Liberty | 503-581-8580

Phil Ridling

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Liberty | 503-581-8580

Keizer Area

Sheryl Resner

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Keizer | 503-304-8641

Mario Montiel

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Keizer | 503-393-8166

Kylee Williams

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Keizer | 503-304-8641

Charisa Henckel

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Keizer | Station 503-393-4677

Surrounding Area

Bridgette Justis

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Sublimity | 503-769-3180

Tim Yount

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Silverton | 503-873-2454

Kelly Denney

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Dallas | 503-623-2146

David Eder

FINANCIAL ADVISOR
Stayton | 503-769-4902

Compare Our CD Rates

Bank-issued, FDIC-insured

Term	APY*	Minimum deposit
6-month	1.90 %	\$1,000
1-year	1.75 %	\$1,000
2-year	1.85 %	\$1,000

* Annual Percentage Yield (APY) effective 08/13/19. CDs offered by Edward Jones are bank-issued and FDIC-insured up to \$250,000 (principal and interest accrued but not yet paid) per depositor, per insured depository institution, for each account ownership category. Please visit www.fdic.gov or contact your financial advisor for additional information. Subject to availability and price change. CD values are subject to interest rate risk such that when interest rates rise, the prices of CDs can decrease. If CDs are sold prior to maturity, the investor can lose principal value. FDIC insurance does not cover losses in market value. Early withdrawal may not be permitted. Yields quoted are net of all commissions. CDs require the distribution of interest and do not allow interest to compound. CDs offered through Edward Jones are issued by banks and thrifts nationwide. All CDs sold by Edward Jones are registered with the Depository Trust Corp. (DTC).