

《美国幼儿托育服务缺口巨大 乡村地区陷托育危机》

在疫情和通胀的双重影响下，美国各地尤其是乡村地区的托育危机愈发严重。美国有11个州至少有60%的居民地处“托育荒漠”，找不到托幼机构的父母们只能被迫辞职或从事兼职工作。



Photo/Pexels

A shortage of child care in the US has become so acute that it ' s reaching far into rural communities, including one northwestern Oregon county where future embryos are in line for a spot at Amy Atkinson ' s nursery and preschool.

美国严重的托育服务短缺问题已经深入乡村社区，在西北部俄勒冈州的一个县，人们早在试管婴儿的胚胎时期就开始在当地的幼儿园——艾米·阿特金森幼儿园排队。

"We have children that have not been implanted yet that are on our waitlist, "

said Atkinson, referring to in vitro fertilization. " It ' s desperation. "

阿特金森幼儿园称：“有的胚胎还未被移植到人体内，就已经登记排队等着上我们幼儿园，这是一种多么绝望的心态。”

From Oregon to New York, demand for child care far exceeds supply. Families are growing increasingly desperate as providers deal with staffing shortages exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic as well as historically low pay worsened by inflation.

从俄勒冈州到纽约，托幼需求远远超过了供给。受新冠疫情的影响，再加上通货膨胀导致创下历史新低的工资水平进一步缩水，托育从业人员短缺问题日益加剧，从而使得美国家庭越发绝望。

Half of US residents live in child care deserts where fewer than a third of children have access to a slot at a licensed facility, according to the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank that has published reports on the issue. Access challenges have forced many parents to change jobs, reduce their hours or quit altogether.

就这一问题发布报告的自由党派智库美国进步中心称，半数美国居民住在“托育荒漠”地区，在这里不到三分之一的幼儿有机会进入正规托幼机构。托幼难迫使许多父母换工作、减少工作时长或干脆辞职。

The coronavirus pandemic shone a spotlight on the national child care crisis as an estimated 10% of the country's programs shuttered. Between December 2019 and March 2021, about 16,000 programs permanently closed across 37 states, according to a report from Child Care Aware of America, a national network of child care resources and referral agencies.

新冠疫情凸显了全美的托育危机，据估计有10%的托育项目已停办。美国儿童保育意识中心的报告显示，2019年12月至2021年3月期间，37个州累计约1.6万个托育项目已经永久关停。美国儿童保育意识中心是全美性质的托育资源查阅网络。

Oregon is among 11 states where at least 60% of residents live in a child care desert, according to Center for American Progress data. Utah ranks highest, with 77%.

美国进步中心的数据显示，美国有11个州至少有60%的居民地处“托育荒漠”，俄勒冈州就是其中之一。犹他州的“托育荒漠”化程度最高，77%的居民所在地缺乏托育资源。

Child care deserts are disproportionately in low-income urban and rural communities. In cities, day cares tend to be concentrated in wealthier neighborhoods and costs can be exorbitant, the Center for American Progress has found. But rural shortages are more likely and more acute — many communities have no child care facilities at all. A 2018 report by the center found that 59% of rural communities are child care deserts, compared to 56% of urban and 44% of suburban communities.

托育荒漠在低收入城乡社区所占的比例尤其大。美国进步中心发现，城市里的日托所通常都集中在比较富有的社区，价格也很昂贵。但是乡村地区更可能出现托育服务短缺问题，而且问题更严重，很多社区根本没有托育设施。美国进步中心2018年的一份报告发现，59%的乡村社区是“托育荒漠”，相比之下，城市和郊区社区的这一比例分别是56%和44%。

Low pay and lack of benefits are fueling the nationwide shortage, as providers scramble to retain workers.

工资低和福利差引发了全美托育资源的短缺，因为托幼机构很难留住员工。

The median hourly wage for child care workers is \$11.43, according to May 2021 figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Starbucks and Amazon offer a minimum wage of \$15 an hour for entry-level positions with no certification requirements. Providers are struggling to match those wages in a tight

post-pandemic labor market.

美国劳工统计局2021年5月的数据显示，托育从业人员的平均时薪是11.43美元(约合人民币82元)。星巴克和亚马逊无学历要求的入门级职位最低时薪为15美元。一方面，疫情后的劳动力市场人才紧缺，但另一方面，托幼机构又给不起这么高的工资。

With inflation at a 40-year high, many parents are facing a dilemma — they can ' t find child care, but they can ' t afford to stay home.

当前美国通胀创下40年来最高水平，许多父母都面临一个两难的困境，既找不到托幼机构，又不能在家带娃，因为不工作就没钱花。

In Gearhart, a town of 1,900 residents about 14 miles south of Astoria, Karli

Neilson takes time off and works part-time so that she can watch her 2-year-old son. She hasn ' t been able to find formal care since he was born.

在阿斯托里亚市以南14英里左右、常住居民仅有1900人的吉尔哈特镇，卡莉·尼尔森为了照顾2岁大的儿子辞掉全职工作干起了兼职。自从儿子出生以来她一直没找到正规的托幼机构。

"It just got to be like a part-time job just doing the research and trying to find a place," Neilson said. " Child care issues probably cause me more anxiety than anything else ever has in my life. "

尼尔森说：“光是托幼机构的调研和寻找也相当于一份兼职了。托幼问题给我带来的焦虑可能比我生活中的其他任何事情曾给我带来的焦虑都要多。”

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