

Snapshot

The Economic Impact of Child Care Teacher Turnover

Paul and Becky switched cars this morning so that Paul could head straight to his dentist appointment. She would take Paul Jr. on to child care, then head into her place of work, Sam's Printing Shop.

Both Becky and Paul work full time and spend about 10% of their earnings on child care, or \$4,000 a year - almost the same cost as a year in a public college in North Carolina. Paul Jr. attends St. Mary's Child Care Center, an average child care center with a 3 star rating. It's located conveniently to Paul and Becky's job sites. Should Paul Jr. get sick, which happened a lot last year when he was cutting teeth, one of them could dash over and check on him or take him home if necessary.

The print shop stays open Monday - Saturday running two twelve hour shifts. Becky administers the company's human resources department. The shop would soon employ 50 full time and 20 part time staff. They had just landed the biggest account in the history of the company that would set the shop up with 2 additional years of solid funding if the first year of the job went smoothly.

Paul's job as a mechanic at Grambling Tire Company made his schedule less flexible. Unless it was an emergency that could be handled over lunch, Monday through Friday, Becky was responsible.

Today had started out normal enough but it soon fell to pieces. At 8:35 AM, Paul Jr.'s child care center called -- the teacher in Paul's room quit this morning. It was the third one this year. No notice, she just didn't show up. The director learned that the local McDonald's had hired her at \$8.50 an hour, \$2 more than she made doing child care. There was no one to cover the room so the director was doing what she could to cover the child care needed by moving the older children to other rooms. Paul Jr. was too young, she said, to be placed in a room with older kids according the regulations. He would have to be picked up, she apologetically told Becky.

The 8 job interviews Becky had set up for Sam's Printing Shop were all in place - it had taken weeks to do it - they would now have to be put on hold. The order waiting to be filled by Sam's would wait too, at a cost of \$2,000 of lost printing time. Sam bit his lip and agreed to let Becky go pick up Paul Jr., knowing the risk he and his business were taking.