



Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

The cost of raising kids

How much does it cost to raise a child? This question has been widely debated, with figures ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per year. The numbers vary widely, but what remains undisputed is that raising a child from birth to the age of 18 is a massive undertaking that will reverberate through all areas of your life, and affect your financial decisions well into the future.



Some of the things to consider when raising a child are the costs of **childcare, food, healthcare, clothing, recreation and education.**

Keep in mind these are only estimates, and that actual costs may vary widely. When it comes to raising children, you don't want to be overwhelmed and preoccupied with financial stressors. Here are some tips to lessen the burden of the financial aspects of parenting, to give you space to do what you do best - be with your family.

Make a budget and stick to it

This is perhaps the number one thing: having a budget will save you much stress and anxiety. If you are in a two-parent family, work together with your partner to establish where and how you will spend your hard-earned money. It can be very helpful to engage the help of a financial advisor, especially if you aren't skilled at budgeting.

Set up an emergency fund

Whether or not you have children, life is often full of surprises. These could include health complications, repairs to your home or car, or situations where you find yourself needing to take time off work. Stowing money away for when something unexpected comes your way will protect you from having to go into debt.

Go secondhand

When your child is growing quickly, buying used clothing or accepting gently worn gifts from other parents is a no-brainer. There is more you can do to take part in the secondhand economy such as swapping, donating, borrowing, and lending. Going secondhand not only cuts down on your spending, it's great for the environment and connects you with other parents as well.

Skip specialty items

There is an entire industry built around parenting, and selling specially made goods for everything a new parent might need. But a lot of these things - nursing clothing, diaper bags, decorative items for nurseries - can be replaced by comparable items that aren't tailor made for parents or children.

Teach your children about finances

As children get older, they begin to have opportunities to manage their own money. As a parent, it is important that you encourage and even seek out these opportunities. And this starts with you: be open with your kids about how much you make and how much your expenses are each month. Share your budget with them and help them create their own. Insist that they start earning money for themselves - even if it's only a little - and help them manage this income. Good habits start early!

Getting and keeping your finances on track **positively affects your mental health**, allowing you to be a healthy and present parent. If you feel overwhelmed with the financial realities of parenting, reach out and talk to a counselor today about your concerns and your hopes. Finances don't need to be a burden; let budgeting and planning be your greatest allies in leading a balanced and healthy financial life.

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