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A 2025 Blueprint for Better Care Benefits

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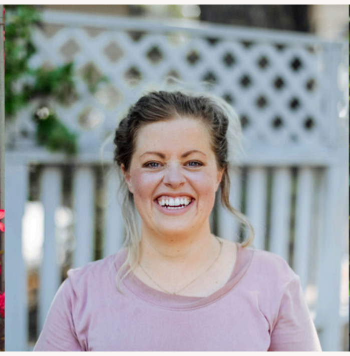
Executive Overview

As Helpr continues to scale, we are proud to contribute to the growing conversation around care benefits and their role in shaping the future of work. This e-book represents a thoughtful approach to understanding the state of the care crisis, its impact on businesses and families, and how care benefits can be designed in 2025 to address it. This report combines a literature review of existing data with qualitative research conducted by Helpr.

The goal of this report is to offer a comprehensive and objective perspective on the care crisis. By synthesizing existing studies, analyzing emerging trends, and grounding our findings in the real experiences of working families, we aim to shed light on what care benefits should look like in 2025—not just for employers but for employees who have been historically overlooked. This includes frontline and hourly workers, women, and people of color, all of whom face disproportionate challenges in accessing affordable and reliable care.

This is not just an academic exercise. Our purpose is to bridge the gap between existing research and actionable strategies. Chapter 4, in particular, takes a deep dive into how care benefits can be structured to meet the needs of those who require them most and how to hit a 425% average ROI for businesses that offer the benefit to their workforces. Current research on this topic is sparse, and our intent is to begin filling that gap. By analyzing how care benefits can be more equitable, accessible, and effective, we hope to provide a framework for employers to maximize the impact of their programs.

This is just the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing dialogue. By focusing on the voices of employees, leveraging existing research, and committing to future exploration, we are excited to lead the charge in creating care benefits that truly work for everyone.

About the Study

A survey was sent to a sample of 4,157 Helpr benefits holders on December 17, 2024, and again on January 8, 2025, to explore their experiences with care benefits. The 15-question survey was designed and revised for unbiased results. Access to the full survey can be found here. Participants were invited to answer as many or as few questions as they felt comfortable with, and all responses were deemed valid.

Additionally, responses were gathered from a 2021 survey where benefits holders were invited to provide testimonials in response to the prompt: **"Please leave a testimonial about your experience with Helpr."**

No incentives, rewards, or compensation were offered for participation in either survey. In total, 126 responses were analyzed for this guide.

The 2024/2025 survey sought to enhance recommendations for improving care benefits by incorporating qualitative insights from those with firsthand experience. To ensure neutrality, the survey avoided specific references to Helpr, focusing instead on care benefits in general. Any mentions of "Helpr" in responses have been replaced with "[care benefits]" throughout this guide to maintain objectivity.

For more information on Helpr's initiatives to make care benefits more accessible to working families, see the "About Helpr" section on page 36.

About the Participants

Gender*

Male	20.63%
Female	58.73%
Unspecified	20.63%

*Gender was determined based on the participants' names. If a name was gender-neutral or unfamiliar, it was categorized as "Unspecified."

Company Size*

1–499 employees	10%
500–4,999 employees	25%
5,000–9,999 employees	45%
10,000–30,000+ employees	11%
Unspecified	9%

*Company information was identified through participants' email addresses, and company size was sourced using ZoomInfo data. If a participant did not provide a company email, their company size was labeled as "Unspecified."

Industry*

Technology	25%
Manufacturing	21%
Accounting	15%
Construction	9%
Unspecified	9%
Media	7%
Retail	4%
Biotech	2%
Consulting	2%
Real Estate	2%
Science	2%
Education	1%
Engineering	1%
Automotive	1%

*Industry information was identified through participants' email addresses. If a participant did not provide a company email, their industry was labeled as "Unspecified."

CHAPTER ONE

The Care Crisis in 2024: Challenges and Inequities

The care crisis in America has been building for decades, but in 2024, the pressures on businesses and working families are looming heavily. The expiration of key supports, coupled with skyrocketing costs and growing demand for care, has pushed families and caregivers to the brink. From childcare closures to the rising costs of eldercare, the crisis is straining working families, creating stark inequities, and leaving millions without adequate support.

This chapter delves into the escalating challenges, the employees who bear the heaviest burdens, and the trajectory of a system in desperate need of reform.

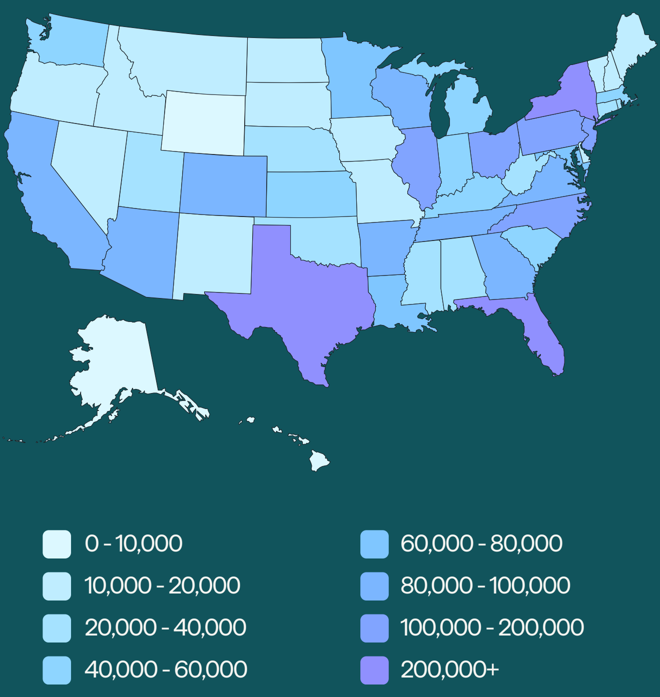
Childcare Closures and Rising Costs

One of the most significant developments in 2024 was the September 2023 expiration of the $24 billion Child Care Stabilization Program, which has been instrumental in keeping childcare facilities afloat. Without this federal lifeline, an estimated 70,000 childcare programs are at risk of closure, threatening care access for 3.2 million children.[1]

> “Babysitting rates are almost double what they were 5 years ago. Daycares have ridiculously long waitlists for good ones, and their rates are having double-digit increases each year as well.”

These childcare facilities have been forced to raise rates to survive, with the rising costs placing quality care out of reach for many working families. Childcare costs have surged by 22% since 2020,[2] and families are now spending up to 20% of their medium income on care costs.[3]

Children Per State Set to Lose Childcare



Kashen, J., Valle-Gutierrez, L., Woods, L., & Milli, J. (2023, June 21). Child care cliff: 3.2 million children likely to lose spots with end of federal funds. The Century Foundation. https://tcf.org/content/report/child-care-cliff/

Elder Care Strains

Monthly Median Costs: USA - National (2023)

In-Home Care	
Home Maker Services[1]	$5,720
Home Health Aids[1]	$6,292
Community & Assisted Living	
Adult Day Health Care[2]	$2,058
Assisted Living Facility[3]	$5,350
Nursing Home Facility	
Semi-Private Room[2]	$8,669
Private Room[2]	$9,733

1. Based on annual rate divided by 12 months (assumes 44 hours per week)
2. Based on annual rate divided by 12 months
3. As reported, monthly rate, private, one bedroom

Genworth. (2024). Cost of care survey. Genworth. https://genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care

On the other hand, the aging population in the United States is growing rapidly, with 10,000 Americans turning 65 every day. By 2030, the number of adults aged 65 and older is projected to surpass 73 million, representing more than 20% of the population.[4]

> “The cost of caregivers (literally even an elder care 'sitter') are astronomical."

Elder care costs are soaring, with the average annual cost of a private room in a nursing home costing $9,733 per month. In-home health care services, often considered more affordable, still cost families over $5,000 per month on average.[5]

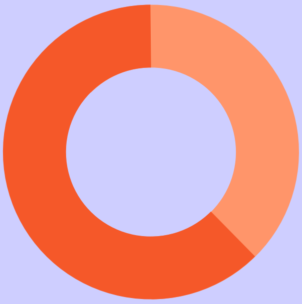
What makes the crisis even more alarming is its trajectory. The current lack of federal investment in the care economy is unsustainable, and demand for services is only projected to grow.

Increased Reliance on Unpaid Caregiving

The high cost of care in the U.S. is driving employees out of the workforce and into reliance on unpaid caregiving. Nearly half of all employees take several days off each month for caregiving duties, with over half of caregivers considering quitting during their leave—a decision they are over three times more likely to make than before taking time off.[6]

Meanwhile, informal and unpaid care, predominantly performed by women (65%), amounts to 245 hours per person annually and would be valued at over $1 trillion if compensated.[7]

Americans' Unpaid Care Is Worth More Than $1 Trillion Annually



Female	$643.3B
Male	$402.9B

Gallagher Robbins, K., & Mason, J. (2024, June 27). Americans' unpaid caregiving is worth more than $1 trillion annually – and women are doing two-thirds of the work. National Partnership for Women & Families. https://nationalpartnership.org/americans-unpaid-caregiving-worth-1-trillion-annually-women-two-thirds-work/

Before care benefits, who did you rely on for help with care tasks?

"Unreliable family members."

"We didn't have help."

"Friends, neighbors, and referrals."

"[We only relied on help] when parents visited."

"Family and friends because I don't want a stranger taking care of my son."

"Grandparents but they still work full time."

Inequities in Access to Care

In America's fractured care system, not all families face the same challenges. Some employees in higher-paying, flexible professions benefit from perks like on-site childcare or subsidized care. However, for non-desk workers—those in retail, hospitality, food service, construction, and other hourly roles—rigid schedules and low wages make care nearly unattainable. In Washington, D.C., childcare costs for a minimum-wage worker supporting two young children can consume 184% of their income.[8]

Women, especially single mothers, are among the hardest hit. Unemployment rates for single moms with children under 3 years old reach 11.2%.[9] Families of color, particularly Black and Hispanic households, face additional systemic barriers. In 2019, only 54% of eligible Black preschoolers were enrolled in Head Start programs, and Black families have the lowest access to nearby Head Start centers compared to families of all other races.[10] Families of color were further found to face poorer quality care options compared to white families.[11]

> "I'm facing challenges now, as a working mom, that I have never experienced, and [I] am having to make hard choices about the desire to further my career and support my teams in different markets while finding a balance with my family life and priorities."

Access to care in the United States is deeply inequitable, leaving many families—particularly those already marginalized—without the resources they need. The question for business leaders is how this affects their bottom line.

What factors, if any, affect your ability to access care?

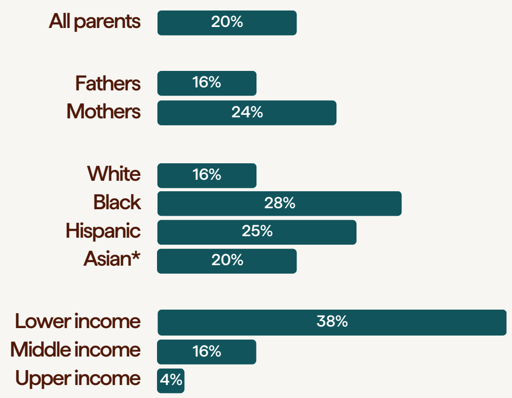
"I can't afford it from my paycheck."

"Money. It's expensive to hire care."

"Cost of care ..."

Nearly 4 in 10 lower-income parents in the U.S. reported challenges paying for child care in 2022

Among parents who say they need child care, % who say there have been times in the past 12 months when they did not have enough money to pay for child care:



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only. Note: Based on parents with at least one child under 18 who report needing child care. White, Black, and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2021 earnings.

Leppert, R. (2024, October 25). 5 facts about child care costs in the U.S. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/10/25/5-facts-about-child-care-costs-in-the-us/

CHAPTER TWO

Why the Care Crisis is a Business Crisis

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Caregiving responsibilities are quietly but powerfully reshaping the workplace, eroding productivity, driving turnover, and undermining accessibility, inclusion, and belonging efforts—and they have been for decades. This invisible burden, borne disproportionately by women, people of color, and lower-income employees, is costing businesses billions annually while creating a workforce on the brink of burnout.

This chapter explores why the care crisis is inherently a business crisis and examines its specific implications.

Productivity Losses

Caregiving is crippling workplace productivity. Over 80% of employees with caregiving responsibilities admit their duties impact their performance,[12] leading to a drop in productivity. For businesses, this translates into a staggering $33 billion lost in productivity annually[13]—a silent drain that grows even larger when considering the $8.8 trillion in productivity losses due to disengaged employees globally.[14]

Impact of caregiving actions on employees: Repercussions perceived on caregivers' careers.

For current caregiving employees: To what extent have the following possible consequences of caregiving responsibilities negatively affect your career progression, if at all?

Fuller, J. B., & Raman, M. (2019, January 17). The caring company: How employers can help employees manage their caregiving responsibilities—while reducing costs and increasing productivity. Harvard Business School. https://www.hbs.edu/managing-the-future-of-work/Documents/The_Caring_Company.pdf

This is a systemic issue for employers. Missed deadlines, frequent absences, and disengagement are daily realities for caregiving workers, yet many companies remain ill-equipped to address them. Ignoring the problem isn't just costly—it's unsustainable. Without intervention, businesses risk losing their most valuable asset: their people.

Have care responsibilities affected your work performance?

"Sometimes you worry about falling behind on work or submitting low-quality work."

"... We have to stop working a few hours earlier than we would due to coverage only going so long."

"... if I have to juggle childcare and work because school is out or a kid is home sick, I'm unable to do my work the way I need to, which can be scary and risks me jeopardizing my job."

"I've been forced to call in [several times] or go late most of the time."

Employee Turnover

Turnover is one of the most expensive challenges businesses face—replacing employees is expensive: it can cost 3–4 times an employee's salary to recruit, onboard, and train a replacement.[15]

Altogether, U.S. businesses spend an estimated $1 trillion annually on turnover costs.[16]

Caregiving responsibilities add fuel to this fire. One in three caregivers leaves the workforce entirely due to the demands of caregiving,[17] disrupting teams and increasing the financial strain on businesses. As cited in Chapter 1, the impact is felt most acutely by women, lower-income employees, and people of color—groups that often have fewer resources to balance care responsibilities with work. Sandwich-generation employees, tasked with managing both eldercare and childcare, are especially at risk.

And a less diverse workforce is a less resilient workforce.

How, if at all, have care benefits influenced your ability to stay at your job?

"I have stayed in my job solely for these benefits at certain times."

"[Care benefits] make it easier to stay committed to my job."

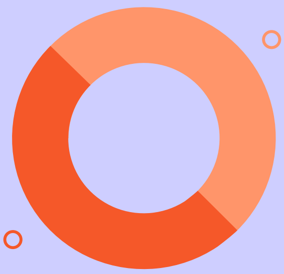
"These benefits 100% allow me to stay at my job and do better work."

"It allows me to go to work; without [these benefits] I would have to take the day off."

Choice in Taking on Caregiver Role:

"Do you feel you had a choice in taking on this responsibility for caring for your [relation]?"

Base: Caregivers of Recipient age 18+ (n=1,248)



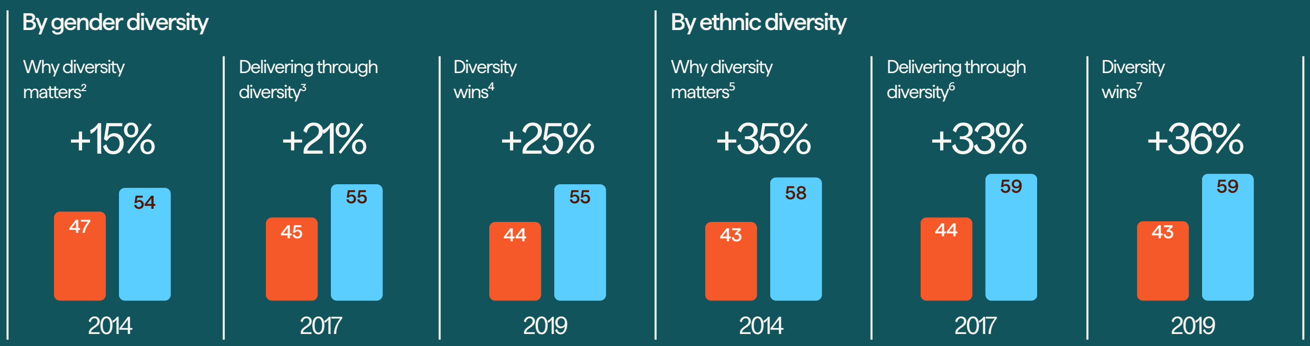
Hours Caregiving per Week	
0-20 (n=826)	21+ (n=416)
45%	59%*

National Alliance for Caregiving, & AARP Public Policy Institute. (2015, June). Caregiving in the U.S. National Alliance for Caregiving, & AARP Public Policy Institute. https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015/caregiving-in-the-united-states-2015-report-revised.pdf

Accessibility, Inclusion, and Belonging Outcomes

The business case for diversity in executive teams remains strong

Likelihood of financial outperformance,[1] %



[1]Likelihood of financial outperformance versus the national industry median; p-value <0.05, except 2014 data where p-value <0.1. [2]n = 383; Latin America, UK, and US; earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) margin 2010–13. [3]n = 991; Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2011–15. [4]n = 1,039; 2017 companies for which gender data available in 2019, plus Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; EBIT margin 2014–18. [5]n = 364; Latin America, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2010–13. [6]n = 589; Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US, where ethnicity data available in 2019; EBIT margin 2011–15. [7]n = 533; Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US, where ethnicity data available in 2019; EBIT margin 2014–18.

Source: Dixon-Fyle, S., Dolan, K., Hunt, D. V., & Prince, S. (2020, May 19). Diversity wins: How inclusion matters. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters#/

Companies with strong diversity are outperforming their peers more than ever. Organizations with the highest representation of women executives are 25% more profitable than those with the least gender diversity.[19] Similarly, companies leading in ethnic and cultural diversity surpass their less diverse counterparts by 36%.[18] Despite these advantages, over one-third of companies lack women in executive roles, and ethnically and culturally diverse teams make up just 14% of the workforce.[18]

> "It's our 3rd year with [care benefits] and we've seen a significant increase in utilization over time. [Care benefits] is more than just backup care. In terms of coverage, there is a wide variety of services to choose from that can be used for dependents of all ages. One of the reasons that employees cannot return to work after maternity leave is that they need childcare. With [care benefits], we are able to address these issues for them. We have seen employees be more engaged at work because of this benefit."
> - Benefits Leader, National Professional Sports League

One critical factor influencing diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes is care support. Women are 5 to 8 times more likely than men to have their careers affected by caregiving responsibilities.[19] Additionally, 55% of Hispanic and 44% of Black parents are not returning to work due to caregiving needs.[20] These statistics highlight that access to robust care support is essential not only for advancing accessibility, inclusion, and belonging efforts but also for driving business success.

Companies that fail to invest in care solutions risk losing their competitive edge, their talent, and their bottom line. By prioritizing robust care support, businesses have an opportunity to not only alleviate these challenges but also foster a resilient, inclusive, and productive workforce. The path forward is clear: Care for your people, and they'll care for your business.

CHAPTER THREE

The Case for Care Benefits

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Over the past decade, care benefits have emerged as a key remedy in response to the growing care crisis. These benefits go beyond traditional on-site company childcare centers by offering employer-subsidized or reimbursed programs that cover the costs of professional care offsite. This flexibility allows employees to access care for a wide range of needs, including child care, elder care, or even personal recovery.

Care benefits can assist with managing unexpected school closures, accommodating last-minute business trips, ensuring timely school pickups, or arranging transportation for elderly family members' doctor appointments. By addressing these critical care gaps, employers enable their teams to navigate personal responsibilities without sacrificing their professional focus. This support empowers employees to attend work with reduced stress and greater peace of mind, fostering both productivity and well-being.

Research in this field is still in its early stages, but the findings so far present a strong case for businesses to get involved, challenging the misconception that providing such benefits is prohibitively expensive or unattainable.

Higher Retention, Presenteeism, Productivity

It's no secret that care benefits can make a huge difference for employees—and the numbers prove it. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, up to 100,000 Americans miss work every month because of childcare issues.[21] Companies that step in with childcare support see a major win: Employees take up to 16 fewer days off per year.[22]

Because of child care benefits...

Recruitment and Retention

Up to **86%** of working parents **are more likely to stay with their employer**

Career Progression

Up to **78%** of working parents report **positive career impacts**

Productivity and Presence

Working parents avoid **up to 16 absences each year**

Job Satisfaction

Clear improvements to **company culture, morale, and goodwill**

Boston Consulting Group (BCG), & Moms F1ist. (2024, March). The employee benefit that pays for itself. Boston Consulting Group, & & Moms F1ist. https://momsfirst.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/The-Employe-Benefit-That-Pays-for-Itself_March-2024-2.pdf

And it's not just about showing up. Care benefits are a game-changer for keeping employees on board. In fact, 86% of working parents say they're more likely to stay with their current employer because of these perks.[23] And when it comes to attracting new talent, 90% of employees say childcare benefits matter just as much as paid time off and health insurance.[21] The ripple effects are real—78% of parents using these benefits report positive impacts on their careers, from being more focused to simply feeling less stressed.[21]

While we know a lot about the benefits of childcare support, research on eldercare is still catching up. Even so, the need is clear. Nearly half of employees are juggling elder caregiving responsibilities, and 64% of them say they've missed work because of it.[23]

Then, there's the sandwich generation—those balancing both childcare and eldercare at the same time. With 25% of the workforce expected to fall into this group by 2030,[24] the demand for care benefits is only going to grow. Supporting employees with these challenges isn't just the right thing to do—it's a smart investment.

Intangible Returns: Boosted Morale, Engagement, and Culture

Research notes that care benefits bring significant intangible benefits,[22] and our qualitative research supports this. Beyond the measurable impacts, care benefits have a profound effect on the emotional and cultural fabric of an organization.

Employees repeatedly express that having care benefits makes them feel valued and understood by their employers.

"[Care benefits] have been such a perk that show that my company cares about me and my family."

"I love that [I] have this benefit, and it is one of the primary reasons I will stay at this employer as long as they will have me while I have young kids."

"I feel this small benefit from my employer is not small to me. It makes a huge difference to me. It makes me feel they understand family/life balance and are supportive."

This sense of being cared for fosters loyalty and strengthens trust between employees and leadership, creating a foundation for higher morale across teams. Engagement is another area where care benefits shine. Employees who feel supported in their caregiving responsibilities report being more present and focused at work.

"I could focus even more at work with the knowledge my people and pet(s) are well cared for."

"Very, very [focused]. I don't have to worry or think about how I'd manage to pay from my next paycheck."

"I can focus much better knowing that I won't have to drop something because of a sick kid."

This level of engagement drives creativity, collaboration, and overall team performance. Care benefits also play a vital role in shaping workplace culture. They send a clear message: The organization values its people as whole individuals, not just as workers. This inclusivity not only boosts morale but also attracts a more diverse and motivated workforce, contributing to a healthier and more dynamic organizational environment.

When companies prioritize care, the returns extend far beyond the balance sheet, nurturing a workforce that is resilient, engaged, and ready to thrive.

"[Care benefits alleviate] some of the burden surrounding a family with two working, career-driven parents. Having the extra help during the weeks that my husband is gone allows me to make the most of the hours that I have with my kids. This way, I can be the best version of myself for my family and still fully support my team and career without feeling like I'm letting anyone down."

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The ROI of Investing in Care: A Complex Equation

The financial case for care benefits is clear: They deliver measurable returns that almost always outweigh the initial investment. For every dollar spent on childcare benefits, employers experience a net gain ranging from $0.90 to $4.25, translating to a 90% to an extraordinary 425% return on investment.[22]

We saw a range of returns; **all were positive,** ranging **up to**

425% ROI

JUST 1%

Retaining as few as just 1% of eligible employees can cover the cost of benefits.

Boston Consulting Group (BCG), & Moms F1ist. (2024, March). The employee benefit that pays for itself. Boston Consulting Group, & & Moms F1ist. https://momsfirst.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/The-Employe-Benefit-That-Pays-for-Itself_March-2024-2.pdf

However, the returns businesses achieve vary widely, and they depend heavily on one crucial factor: how care benefits are structured and delivered. Not all care benefits are created equal, and their success hinges on how well they are designed to address the real needs of employees. Poorly executed programs risk falling flat, while thoughtfully tailored benefits can transform workplaces.

How can companies ensure their care benefits reach those who need them most and deliver maximum impact? The next chapter dives into this question, offering actionable insights and strategies to create care solutions that truly matter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Designing Care Benefits That Truly Deliver

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Historically, care benefits were reserved for a select group of employees—typically high-level professionals like doctors, lawyers, and those in tech. A decade ago, the idea of offering care benefits to hourly and frontline workers was almost unthinkable. Yet today, the landscape is shifting. Industries like retail, construction, and food service are beginning to embrace these benefits. And they're not just being offered to those in managerial roles—they're being extended to hourly workers and associates, too, recognizing that workflows are disrupted by absences at ground levels.

It's no surprise—these sectors face some of the highest turnover rates, and their employees often need care benefits the most. As of April 2024, there were 8.76 million job vacancies in the U.S. labor sector, while 3.5 million workers in these roles quit their jobs.[25]

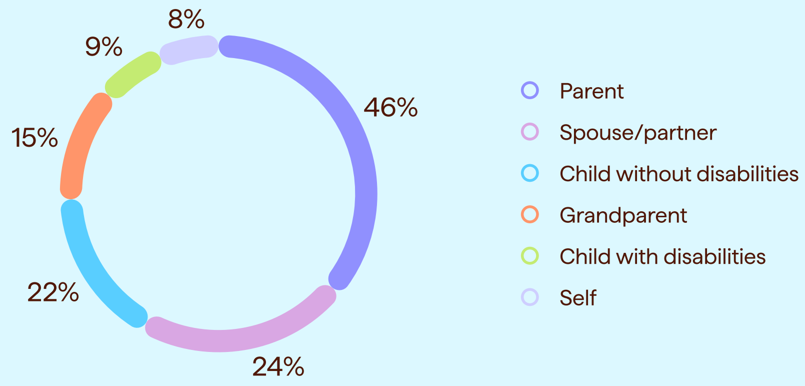
However, many care benefits providers have yet to evolve. They continue to offer the same outdated solutions, failing to address the unique needs of workers on the front lines. So, what does it take to create care benefits that truly work for everyone—not just a select few? The key is a deliberate strategy that prioritizes the experiences and feedback of those most affected by care challenges.

Care Benefits Must Go Beyond Childcare

While childcare remains a significant challenge for working families, as highlighted in this report, it is far from the only care need employees face. Limiting care benefits to one area risks excluding many employees who also require meaningful support.

To truly address the diverse needs of the workforce, care benefits must take a holistic approach and include:

Who do employees care for?



Grayce. (2024). 2024 employee leave trends: What employers need to know. Grayce.
https://files.withgrayce.com/hubfs/Grayce%20-%202024%20Employee%20Paid%20Leave%20Report.pdf

Adult Care:
Care for elderly family members, aging parents, and other dependents who may require assistance with daily tasks, medical appointments, or long-term care needs.

Neurodivergent & Special Needs Care:
Care for individuals with neurodivergent conditions, developmental delays, sensory processing challenges, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities.

Self Care:
Care for employees to manage their well-being, such as recovery from surgery, childbirth, workplace injuries, or chronic health conditions.

By broadening the scope of care benefits, businesses can better meet the diverse challenges faced by their workforce.

> "I am an only child and have been my mother's guardian for some time. In the past few weeks, her pancreatic cancer has taken its toll, and she was placed in hospice care ... The last few days of using [care benefits] during the workday have been the most incredible blessing"

> "[Care benefits] helped me get through a very difficult recovery period after knee replacement surgery ... [my care provider] helped with my physical therapy, organizing my meds, and shopping when I needed it."

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Care Benefits Should Be Subsidized Upfront, Not Reimbursed

Approximately 35% of full-time working families struggle to afford basic necessities like housing, food, medical care, transportation, childcare, and essential household expenses.[26] For non-desk workers, paying upfront for childcare and waiting an average of 30 days for reimbursement is not a viable option. As a result, they often choose not to use the benefit at all, depriving businesses of the potential returns these programs can deliver.

To truly support this demographic and ensure care benefits are accessible, subsidized care should ideally cost between $0 and $10 per hour, aligning with the financial realities of working families.

> "The reduced rate of $5/hr helps tremendously and doesn't lead me to have to go through paperwork to get reimbursed."

> "Upfront subsidies are available because it's easier to reduce the care expenses in real time than paying for everything upfront and waiting for reimbursement which can strain wallets."

> "Subsidized upfront is very helpful, as it avoids employees needing to fund money upfront, when finances might be tight."

Care Benefits Need to Recognize Informal Caregivers

Informal caregivers must be prioritized when designing care benefits, and the reasons are both practical and essential.

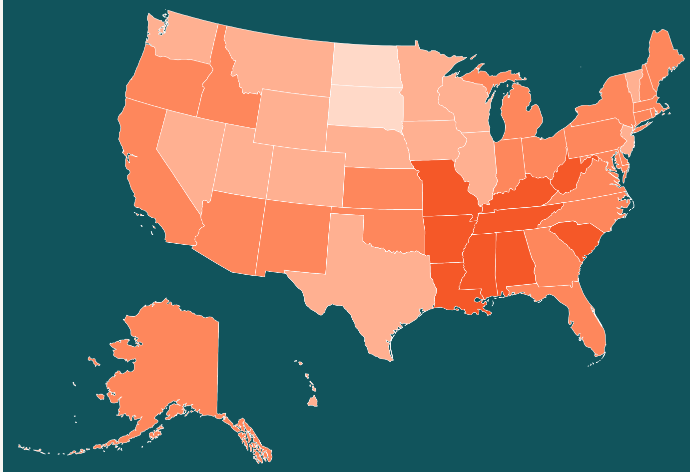
First, informal caregivers are a critical part of the economy. As the AARP senior vice president aptly put it, "Family caregivers are a scarce resource and should be protected and supported. If they walked off the job, we'd be $600 billion short."[27] By recognizing and compensating informal caregivers, employers not only legitimize the value of their work but also enhance the reliability and consistency of the care they provide.

> I love that I can use my family and give them another source of income!"

> I've appreciated an easy way to support family caregivers as we are relying on them - a lot! more than I wish we needed to."

Second, informal caregivers often reflect and uphold cultural values that professional care may not. For example, in Hispanic communities, caregiving is deeply rooted in tradition, with grandparents frequently stepping in to care for children. This cultural preference means many families would feel uneasy relying on a caregiver who doesn't share their language or customs. By acknowledging and supporting informal caregivers, businesses respect cultural nuances and reinforce workplace inclusion.

Percentage of state residents who are unpaid caregivers:



- 13% or higher
- 11% to 12.9%
- 9% to 10.9%
- Less than 9%

Horovitz, B. (2023, March 8). New AARP report finds family caregivers provide $600 billion in unpaid care across the U.S. American Association of Retired Persons. https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/financial-legal/info-2023/unpaid-caregivers-provide-billions-in-care.html

"The ability to utilize a personal network of caregivers is a major step up from other [care] benefit providers."

"The ability to upload and call upon trusted caregivers provides me with a sense of relief and has allowed me to focus on my job when I need to know my child is safe and happy."

"[I rely on] family and friends because I don't want a stranger taking care of my son."

Lastly, care deserts—areas where professional caregiving options are scarce—remain a stark reality for millions of Americans. With 51% of the U.S. population living in childcare deserts, many parents, particularly working mothers, are left with no choice but to leave the workforce.28 This is especially true for those who work irregular hours or shifts that do not align with regular daycare hours. In these scenarios, informal caregivers often serve as the only valid solution, bridging critical gaps in care.

Incorporating and recognizing unpaid care providers within care benefits creates a win-win situation. Families often prefer compensating their loved ones for care, and these informal providers typically charge less than professional care providers. According to Helpr's 2024 data, informal care providers earned an average of $19.36 per hour (with the average copay being $4), compared to $30.16 per hour for professional sitters. Additionally, families chose informal care providers 2.9 times more often than professional sitters, highlighting their popularity and cost-effectiveness for businesses.

Comprehensive Vetting Is Key for Care Benefits

For families relying on professional care as part of their care benefits, reliability and consistency are non-negotiable. Without dependable care, employees face the same gaps and challenges they had before, undermining the effectiveness of these benefits. Unfortunately, many care benefits providers, such as UrbanSitter, Care.com, and Sittercity, allow almost anyone to become a care provider after a basic background check. While this is a start, it's far from sufficient.

A comprehensive vetting process is essential to ensure families receive safe and consistent care every time they book. This should include reference checks, in-person interviews, social media screenings, ID verification, and mandatory CPR certification. By raising the standard for professional care, families can fully trust and utilize these benefits, and businesses will ultimately see better returns through improved employee productivity and retention.

Helpr's 7-point screening process:

1. Interview
2. Reference Check
3. I.D. Verification
4. Background Check
5. CPR Certification
6. DUI Check
7. Social Media Check

> [Care benefits] have come through whenever we're stuck for last minute care with wonderful caregivers."

> "[My care benefits] have consistently [been] reliable and [offer] competent sitters that are very friendly."

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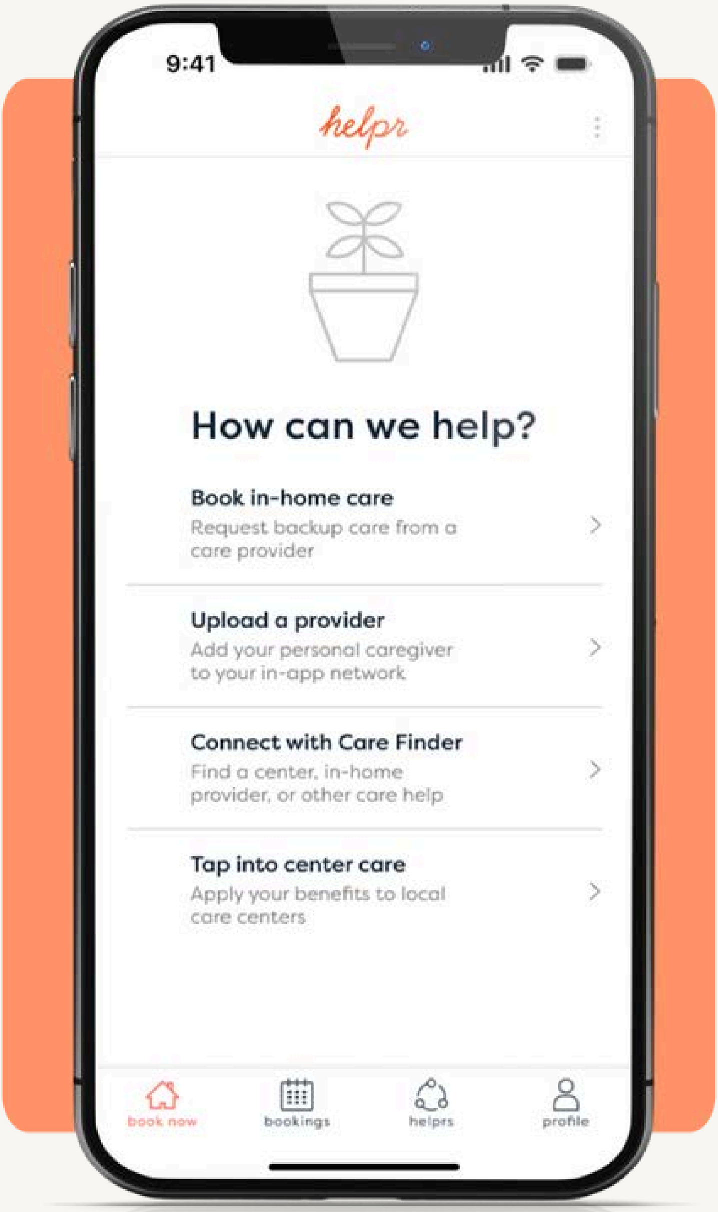
Tech-Powered Care Benefits Boost Accessibility and Savings

Care benefits lose their impact if employees can't access them easily. SaaS technology provides a seamless, all-in-one solution, accessible with just a smartphone. Through a dedicated app, employees can book various types of care, monitor benefit hours and copays, and manage their care providers—all in one place.

This user-friendly approach not only simplifies access for employees but also reduces administrative overhead for care benefits providers, making these programs more cost-effective for employers. Additionally, with technology-driven solutions, care benefits can be implemented for a new company in as little as three weeks, ensuring swift access for those who need support.

Geolocation features further enhance the system by verifying when employees are at work and when caregivers are providing care. This minimizes fraud and ensures care benefits are used as intended, maximizing returns. Tech-powered care benefits represent a smarter, faster, and more efficient way to meet the needs of today's workforce.



> "[An app for care benefits] is so easy to navigate. I love how once assigned, your [care provider] gives you a call to discuss your child's needs."

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There is a Need for Global Care Benefits

As of June 2024, immigrants make up over 19% of the U.S. workforce, representing more than 32 million workers, including both documented and undocumented individuals.[29] Additionally, U.S. multinational enterprises employed 44.3 million workers worldwide in 2022.[30]

> "Care benefits feel like a luxury benefit, but they aren't. They have been so, so helpful to my family and me. I wish they were treated like healthcare benefits."

Care needs don't disappear internationally—in fact, they're often more challenging to address due to limited government support and fewer professional care options. For global teams and international companies, it's crucial that care benefits extend beyond the U.S. border. Care benefits should be designed to meet the needs of a diverse, global workforce, providing equitable support to all employees, wherever they may be.

Meeting the needs of frontline and hourly employees through care benefits isn't just an option—it's a necessity. These workers are the backbone of industries with the highest turnover and the greatest need for support, yet they're often left behind by outdated benefit models. By offering accessible, affordable, and tailored care solutions, businesses can bridge critical gaps, empower their workforce, and unlock the full potential of their teams, hitting that 425% return on investment. True progress begins when care benefits prioritize those who need them the most.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

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The care crisis is no longer just a family burden—it's a workforce challenge, a business problem, and an opportunity to lead with purpose. Over the course of this e-book, we've explored how the rising costs of care, the inequities in access, and the burden on employees have pushed families and businesses to their breaking points. But we've also uncovered the solution: Care benefits that meet the moment.

This year has brought the cracks in the care system into sharp focus. With the expiration of federal childcare stabilization programs, skyrocketing eldercare costs, and over half the population living in care deserts, working families are at a breaking point. These challenges disproportionately affect women, people of color, and non-desk workers, amplifying inequities across industries. At the same time, businesses are grappling with the fallout: increased absenteeism, turnover, and lost productivity.

Key Takeaways

01 The Care Crisis is a Business Crisis: Caregiving responsibilities directly impact business outcomes, from reduced productivity to higher turnover costs. Companies ignoring these challenges risk losing both talent and revenue.

02 Holistic Care Benefits Deliver the Best Results: Care programs must extend beyond childcare to include eldercare, self-care, and support for diverse needs, such as neurodivergence and cultural caregiving practices.

03 Accessibility and Affordability Are Essential: Subsidized, hourly care rates, upfront payments, and tech-enabled solutions are key to ensuring care benefits meet the needs of frontline and hourly employees.

04 Innovation Fuels Impact: Leveraging technology and rigorous vetting processes not only boosts accessibility and safety but also drives significant cost savings for businesses.

05 Global Care Solutions Are the Future: As workforces grow increasingly international, care benefits must evolve to support employees regardless of location.

Care Benefits in 2025: The Road Ahead

The coming year is not just about following trends but about rethinking care as a core business strategy. Forward-thinking companies will focus on transforming care benefits into a dynamic tool that enhances their employees' lives and strengthens their business outcomes. Here's how:

Care Benefits Will Become More Personalized

Businesses will use data-driven insights and direct employee feedback to design solutions that address specific needs—whether it's flexible eldercare, hourly childcare, or self-care resources. Personalized benefits aren't just more effective; they reflect an understanding that care is not a one-size-fits-all problem.

Cross-Border Needs Will Be Met

By 2025, care benefits must transcend borders to accommodate international employees and their families. This includes addressing disparities in care infrastructure, such as in regions with fewer professional caregiving options, and providing culturally sensitive programs.

Tech-Powered Accessibility Will Offer Care Anytime, Anywhere

Technology will be the cornerstone of care benefits in 2025, simplifying access and ensuring equity. From real-time geolocation and app-based bookings to automated payment systems, advanced technology will make care benefits more intuitive and affordable. Innovations in fraud prevention and personalized recommendations will also boost trust and satisfaction.

Care Benefits Will Be Embedded in Equity Strategies

Care benefits will no longer be a standalone perk—they will be integral to achieving accessibility, inclusion, and belonging goals. Programs that address the systemic barriers faced by low-income employees, people of color, and women will drive real progress.

Businesses That Ignore Employee Care Needs Will Be Left Behind

Companies without robust care support will face higher turnover rates, reduced employee engagement, and mounting recruitment costs. Employees, particularly those balancing caregiving responsibilities, are more likely to leave roles where they feel unsupported, opting instead for organizations that prioritize their well-being. The growing demand for inclusive workplaces means that businesses failing to evolve will struggle to compete for a shrinking pool of skilled, loyal workers.

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A Call to Lead

As businesses look to the future, the need for bold, proactive care solutions has never been more urgent. By prioritizing care benefits, companies have the power to not only support their employees but also transform their workplaces into spaces of resilience, inclusion, and innovation, hitting returns of 425%.

The future of care benefits lies in meeting employees where they are, bridging gaps, and creating opportunities—for families, for businesses, and for the economy as a whole. The question now isn't whether to invest in care benefits, but how to lead the way in shaping a better, more sustainable workforce for 2025 and beyond.

Your team deserves solutions that truly make a difference, and we're here to help you find them. Whether it's supporting families through life's unexpected challenges or creating opportunities for balance and growth, let's explore what care could look like for your company.

Book a Demo

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About Helpr

At Helpr, our mission is simple yet transformative: to provide care solutions for every working family, no matter their role, income, or location. We offer a comprehensive range of subsidized care benefits designed to meet the diverse needs of today's workforce. From center-based care and professional babysitting to online tutoring and specialized care-finder services, Helpr ensures no employee is left without options.

We take it a step further by subsidizing informal care, allowing employees to rely on trusted family, friends, or neighbors. Helpr is proud to be the only provider in the industry offering this unique and essential support.

Our services span child, adult, and special needs care, available on a full-time, part-time, or last-minute (backup) basis. Operating in over 150 countries, Helpr delivers care solutions wherever employees need them, ensuring accessibility on a global scale.

Powered by cutting-edge SaaS technology, Helpr makes booking care seamless and tracking benefits effortlessly. We create customizable care packages that are cost-effective for employers across industries. We are proud to lead the way in redefining care benefits, supporting employees who have historically been overlooked, and delivering unparalleled returns for businesses.

Scan the QR code below to learn more or set up a demo today:

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