Child care shifting with times

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LAFAYETTE — When Charlene Carriere and her mother opened the Pla-Skool Day Care Center 20 years ago, child care was more of a luxury than it is today.

"You had many more two-parent families where one stayed home with the children," Carriere said. "We didn't need to worry about programs to help pay the costs because that just wasn't a problem for most people. If they could afford it, they used it. If they couldn't, the wife stayed home."

Today, child care is a necessity for most working parents, particularly single parents, Carriere said. The Pla-Skool Day Care Center is one of several in the Lafayette area that accepts families using child care assistance funds, an option that enables many parents to stay in the workforce.

I have so many families who wouldn't be able to work without that money," Carriere said. "There is one mother I've worked with, a single mother, who has four children. I charge $65 a week per child. How would she ever afford to put her children somewhere safe on the minimum wage salary she gets?"

"That's why our theme here has always been that we cater to the working parent. Whatever it takes for that parent to work, we'll do. It makes a lot of extra paperwork for us to take those families, but it's worth it to me.

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