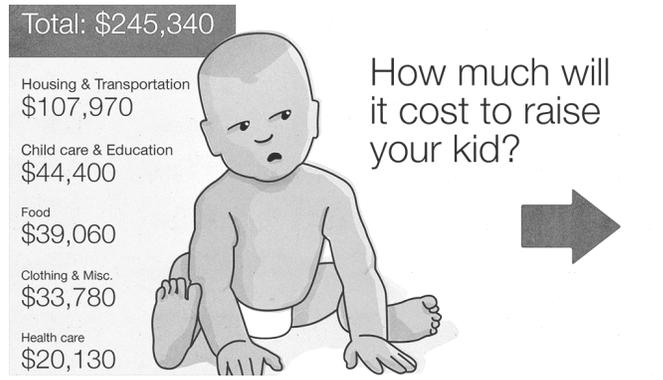


The Cost Of Raising A Child

Money Magazine just released their annual report of how much it will now cost to raise a newborn to the age of 18. Their new figures calculate the average cost to be a staggering **\$245,340**. That does NOT include the cost of a college education!



Talk about sticker shock. But before you young couples suddenly think twice about whether to have a baby (or, hopefully, babies), hear me out. Yes, on average, over an 18 year history of cradle to high school diploma it will cost about \$13,630 a year, or \$1,135 a month, or \$262.11 a week, or \$37.34 a day, or \$1.56 an hour. Does this make you sad? Depressed? Angry? Before you decide not to have a baby, or not have any more, depending on your circumstances, inhale a second and think with me on what you get for your \$1.56 an hour:

Naming rights. Giggles. Deep belly laughs. More love than your heart can hold. Butterfly kisses. Velcro hugs. Endless wonders and pleasures over such simple things as rocks, ants, clouds, worms, flowers, play-dough, bubbles and a zillion other things we adults just take for granted. A tiny warm and soft little hand to hold. A partner to blow bubbles with, or fly kites on a windy day, or build sand castles at the beach, or jump through the puddles with after a rain shower.

Yes, for mere pennies a day you can relive your childhood with finger painting, carved pumpkins, hide-n-seek games, catching lightening bugs on a summer night, or believe in fairy tales all over again. Dreams, indeed, do come true.

But more important than that, as a Christian, for just \$1.56 an hour you can help her learn the alphabet or him learn to behave so that one day they will be reading and leading a lost soul to salvation. Beyond the Adventures of Winnie the Pooh will be the Adventures of God as He works alongside you to mold and make a precious soul into the very image of His own Son – Jesus Christ. Together, in just a fleeting 18 years, you can work in partnership with the God of heaven to make a huge difference in this old sin-cursed world. For \$1.56 an hour you can train a child in the nurture of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). In my accounting book, that's the deal of a lifetime!

Rick Lanning