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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. fax	re: personal story (4 pages)	02/29/1995	b(6)
002. fax	re: child care [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (2 pages)	02/28/1995	b(6)
003. fax	re: personal story (6 pages)	02/28/1995	b(6)
004a. letter	re: social services [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	02/29/1994	b(6)
004b. letter	re: social services [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	12/17/1993	b(6)
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006b. letter	From: Alice J. Pushkar [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	10/20/1994	b(6)
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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
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- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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WHO CARES?

DAY CARE IN AMERICA

As more and more mothers enter the workforce, the demand for day care has soared. But at what cost to the development of children? That question remains at the center of the debate among child development experts, as well as between employed and stay-at-home mothers.

Reprinted from issues of
June 2-9, 1996

About the staff

MACKENZIE CARPENTER, 41, is a projects writer for the Post-Gazette. Raised in Princeton, N.J., and Tokyo, Japan, she covered politics for United Press International's Harrisburg bureau and as a producer/reporter for public television stations in Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. She received a bachelor's degree from Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., and a master's degree in studies of law from Yale Law School. She has won awards for her television work and for her 1994 series on liver transplantation. She is the mother of three children and has used in-home care for them while working part-time and full-time at the Post-Gazette.

SALLY KALSON, 45, writes a weekly column for the Magazine section. She came to the Post-Gazette in 1984 after 12 years working at magazines, teaching college journalism and free-lancing for such publications as the New York Times Magazine and Women's Day. Kalson has won local and state awards for her columns, features and investigative work. In 1994, she won first place in feature writing from the Sunday Magazine Editors Association for a story about an inner-city reading program. She grew up in Mt. Lebanon and is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh. She is the mother of one child who attended the Carriage House Children's Center in Squirrel Hill.

Photographer **ROBIN ROMBACH**, 33, joined the Post-Gazette in 1993. Before that, she worked for the Pittsburgh Press for five years, and for the Orange County Register in California. Her project on infant mortality in Pittsburgh earned her the Robert F. Kennedy Award for Journalism in 1992. Last summer, she hiked and photographed the Appalachian Trail through Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland. An Ohio native, she is a graduate of Ohio University with a degree in journalism.

ANNIE O'NEILL, 30, has been a staff photographer at the Post-Gazette for one year. Before that, she worked at the Detroit News for two years. A 1992 journalism graduate of the University of Missouri, she grew up on Long Island. O'Neill has won local and state awards for her photography in Pennsylvania and Michigan.

MARK ROTH, 48, is assistant managing editor for projects at the Post-Gazette. In that job, he supervises four reporters and edits many of the newspaper's major project stories and multi-part series. In recent months, Roth has overseen stories dealing with the saga of a woman



The Post-Gazette's day care series team is, from left, photographer Robin Rombach, reporter Sally Kalson, editor Mark Roth, photographer Annie O'Neill and reporter Mackenzie Carpenter.

who spent 50 years in a state mental hospital; the replacement of hospital nurses by lower-trained nurses' aides; and the first installment of the PG Benchmarks series. Roth has worked at the Post-Gazette since 1982, serving as reporter, science editor and city editor. His two daughters are grown, and the older daughter is a stay-at-home mother to her son.

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Day 1: June 2, 1996



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

As more and more mothers enter the workforce, the demand for day care has soared. But at what cost to the development of children? That question remains at the center of the debate among child development experts, as well as between employed and stay-at-home mothers. At Day Care on Smithfield, Downtown, Peter Kush, 2, waits for Raquel Davis to finish zipping Kelly McAndrews' jacket so the children can go out to play.

Day care's dilemma

It takes heat from critics, but where's the help?

By Mackenzie Carpenter
and Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writers



In a sweltering day last August at a child care center in Peters, somebody forgot about 4-year-old Alexandra LeVasseur.

She died of heat stroke after being mistakenly locked in a van parked outside the center, Creation Station. Earlier that summer, another child had drowned in a pool at a Luzerne County family day care home. The deaths were the first in more than a decade for any child in day care in Pennsylvania.

They became front page news, and sud-

denly, everyone was talking about day care again.

We had been talking about it the previous April, when the Oklahoma City bombing killed 19 children at the federal building's day care center, and some voices rose to question why they had been put in day care in the first place.

It's what we do whenever the words "death" and "day care" appear in the same headline: We talk — about cracking down on day care, or pouring money into it, or getting rid of it altogether.

Then we stop discussing it, until catastrophe strikes again.

But catastrophe is not likely to visit most of the 9.5 million American children under age 6 who spend their days in child care

centers or family day care homes.

What does affect them every day is less dramatic, but far more pervasive: the mediocre-to-poor quality of most child care, which has been confirmed by every major study in the last decade.

For the past 10 months, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette has been studying day care in the region and the nation to find out why it remains so much less than it ought to be, even as more and more children pour into it.

We discovered that most U.S. day care providers care about children and want to do the best they can for them — but they are swimming against powerful currents that show no sign of abating.

Day care in this country is underfunded,

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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undertrained, disrespected, over-regulated in the wrong areas and under-assisted in the right ones — and then, in the end, demonstrated for not being better than it is.

The quality of day care matters greatly, because children from birth to 5 develop faster than they will at any other time in their lives. The strands of their physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth are more intertwined than later in life. And it's the period when they are least able to protect themselves.

What children need from day care, we know, is warm, nurturing attention that is physically safe, emotionally secure and developmentally appropriate.

What they get, in too many cases, is a place where they're lost in a crowd, spoken to harshly, parked in front of a TV set all day or devastated when the caregiver they love suddenly leaves.

The harm may not be readily apparent, but it is real — particularly for the most vulnerable children.

A recent, long-awaited study by the National Institute of Child Health and Development found that poor quality day care is especially harmful to the emotional security of infants whose mothers have poor parenting skills.

After observing nearly 1,200 children from birth to age 3, the researchers concluded that babies who experienced the double whammy of poor day care and insensitive mothering were the most troubled of any in the group.

On the flip side, it found that high quality day care could increase the security of children whose mothers had the worst relationships with them.

The jury's still out

The institute study is examining children from all social classes, about half of whom are in day care, and half of whom are raised mainly at home.

It still has several years to run, but the initial findings in April did offer one reassurance: As long as children have sensitive, caring moms, day care doesn't seem to harm or enhance their emotional attachment to their mothers.

As some experts were quick to point out, though, these first results did not look at other important measurements of children's well-being — their thinking skills, their language development or their ability to get along with other children.

Many authorities continue to believe that poor day care can damage these vital aspects of a child's personality by undermin-

ing security and self-confidence, squelching curiosity, and making it harder for a little girl or boy to form strong, positive relationships.

And what about the vast majority of day care that is mediocre? The jury is still out. But even if it causes no harm, some say that's a paltry goal for the world's richest nation.

"To say mediocre care is OK because it *might* not cause any long-term damage ... Would that set your mind at ease as a parent?" asks Roger Brown, CEO of the highly respected Bright Horizons Children's Centers, based in Cambridge, Mass.

"We know for certain how powerful and positive a good preschool experience is in the life of a child. But it's almost impossible to measure what didn't happen and what might have been" in a program that is not good.

Of course, not all child care is mired in mediocrity.

There are many excellent day care programs in this country. The children who attend these centers — primarily those whose parents can pay high fees — are in environments where they can develop a good self-image, learn trust and independence, how to mix easily with peers, how to solve problems.

But why should this description fit only an estimated 10 percent of the child care available today?

Robert McCall, co-director of the Office of Child Development at the University of Pittsburgh, offers one reason. "Most child care in this country is designed to meet the needs of the work force — not the needs of kids," McCall says.

If day care is convenient, affordable and doesn't seem out-and-out abusive, many day care providers say, then most parents are satisfied with it, because it lets them go to work without worrying too much about their children.

Boom business

Day care is the seventh-fastest growing industry in America today, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

It's not hard to see why. Women are entering the job market at a brisk rate. About 62 percent of all women with children under age 6 worked either full-time or part-time in 1995, up nearly three percentage points from the year before.

About 10 million more women will have jobs by the year 2005 than in 1994, the labor department estimates, and a lot of them will be working mothers, too.

To keep pace with the demand, the number of day care centers is increasing by 5 percent a year, and the number of people entering the day care field is projected to grow 4.3 percent a year until 2005 — compared with 1.3 percent for employment overall.

Will all this growth make for a higher quality product?

It hasn't so far. The 1994 report "Starting Points," issued by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, described a "quiet crisis" in day care, especially in infant care, even as the supply increased. The report proposed such remedies as a six-month paid parental leave and new federal spending on care for children under 3.

Congress not only ignored most of the Carnegie report, it veered in the opposite direction, passing legislation to cut child care funding for poor and working-class families.

And the problems aren't limited to subsidized day care.

"We're in dark basements in churches and buildings all over America," says an exasperated Marsha Poster, director of the highly regarded Carnegie Mellon University Child Care Center. "We're all serotonin-deprived. What does that tell you about how this country views child care?"

It's the economy

Why do so many parents continue to use a service that has been criticized so much?

Most can't afford not to.

It now takes two wage earners to make what one did 30 years ago, in actual purchasing power. In Pittsburgh, the average hourly earnings in manufacturing jobs are 20 percent lower than they were in 1980, adjusted for inflation.

There are other factors as well. High divorce rates and births outside marriage mean 30 percent of all children are being raised by one parent. Many women simply want to work. And yes, there is sometimes that desire for a bigger house, a private school or a second car.

The average Pittsburgh family spends about \$500 a month for day care, or \$6,000 a year. For middle class families, that's 8 to 10 percent of their income. Poor families pay lower fees, but tuition consumes up to a quarter of their paychecks.

The fees pinch household budgets, but barely cover what it costs to run a center, even though most day care workers' salaries are very low.

The average day care worker in Pennsylvania earned \$13,400 a year in 1992, compared with \$35,500 for public school teach-

ers, who get their summers off.

In fact, in national salary rankings, only the clergy are paid less — and they often get free housing.

Despite the low salaries, and the fact that day care in the U.S. generates \$18 billion a year in revenue, it isn't a hot player on Wall Street.

That's because profit margins are so narrow that only between 50 and 60 percent of day care centers make any money, says Elie Radinsky, a Standard & Poor's analyst.

Why the small profit margin? Because parents will only pay so much.

"Parents shop for the cheapest day care they can find within what they perceive to be a certain range of quality," says Roger Neugebauer, who writes a child care industry newsletter based in Redmond, Wash. And providers, fearful that parents will desert them for cheaper centers, will only raise prices so much, he adds.

That makes it hard to raise quality by spending more on salaries or training.

"Day care is a classic example of market failure," says William Gormley, a Georgetown University political scientist who has studied day care extensively. He says parents are uneducated about day care and unsure of how to demand quality, because they don't know exactly what quality is. So there are no market incentives to make a better product, especially if it means raising fees.

That leaves the day care industry in the worst of both worlds — criticized for being inadequate, yet denied the resources to improve.

The double bind is frustrating to Jerlean Daniels, assistant professor of child development and child care at the University of Pittsburgh and past president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"Don't make us accountable with half a deck," she protests. "Don't starve us out and then judge us for not being better than we are."

PG takes comprehensive look at day care

Here's a preview of what's coming up over the next seven days in "Who Cares? Day Care In America."

Part 2 — Infant care

The younger the child, the more emotional the debate over day care, and with good reason. Babies can't say how they're doing, and it's a critical period in human development. In this installment, we:

- Look at what infants need versus what they get in most day care settings.
- Follow two mothers with vastly different jobs and incomes as they put their babies into infant care.
- Meet a Penn State professor who became famous — or notorious, depending on your perspective — for his criticism of infant day care.

Part 3 — Quality

Parents want good care for their children, but may not know what it is or how to recognize it. And even after they learn, they're often unable or unwilling to pay for it. On this day, we also examine:

- The day care workers. With low wages, no benefits and no respect, why do they stay?
- Family day care. These private homes provide most of the child care in this country — and most of them are illegal, too.
- Chains. Kindercare and other national chains are buying up more and more independent operations. Can they make money and still maintain quality?
- Reggio Emilia. What's the best day care system in the world? Many think it exists in this northern Italian city. We'll take you there.

Part 4 — Employers

How "family friendly" is American business? We found:

- Pittsburgh's corporate community is not on the leading edge of work-and-family policies.
- Nationally, many progressive companies have found new ways to help employees juggle family and work. NationsBank in Charlotte, N.C., for instance, helps employees pay for child care — and has cut turnover by 35 percent.
- Lots of employees want on-site day care, but fewer than 15 percent of U.S. firms offer that perk.
- Most momentum on child care is coming

from business. Why? Because the government won't get involved.

Part 5 — Regulation

Pennsylvania is a paradox. It has some of the toughest regulations in the nation, but weak enforcement. While even the best centers are almost always in violation of some technical rule, many of the worst centers are almost impossible to close.

Examples of the state's problems:

- One of the region's premier centers was cited for two minor violations last fall during a visit by Gov. Ridge. But on the same day, a Philadelphia center that the state had been trying to close for three years was still open.
- Even in serious cases, enforcement varies. The state shut down a Delaware County center after it left an infant locked inside after closing hours, but a New Kensington center was allowed to stay open after two 5-year-olds wandered off and were found a mile away.
- Many church-run centers have been allowed to turn away inspectors for years without consequences, even though state law says they must be licensed.
- Pennsylvania has one of the weakest training requirements for day care workers in the nation — just six hours a year, which can be satisfied by watching videotapes.

Part 6 — Rating the region

Our survey of state inspection reports filed for 562 day care centers in the six-county region in 1995 showed:

- Most centers were cited for building and equipment safety violations — items like peeling paint or unsanitary and broken toys.
- Many lacked criminal or child abuse background clearances for their employees. The state police, who make the checks, are running way behind.
- Of the more than 500 centers in the region, only 25 recorded no violations last year. Eighteen had more than 20 violations each.
- At the Allegheny YMCA or the North Side, the state had to threaten to revoke its day care license before the center moved to reverse seven months of decline.
- In McKees Rocks, two of the region's most troubled centers operate right next to each other. One has tried to improve; the other has fought the state tooth and nail.
- By contrast, in Knoxville, a former welfare mother now runs a model center, one that

maintains high quality despite a constant money crunch.

- At the Carnegie-Mellon University Child Care Center, a first-rate operation is finally being moved from its cramped basement, which regularly floods with sewage.

Part 7 — A trip to Denmark

Almost every European nation has government-subsidized day care and paid parental leaves. But no nation has better overall care for its youngest children than tiny Denmark, where 60 percent of children under 2 are in day care, and the average child care worker makes more than \$30,000 a year and has a three-year degree in child development.

Part 8 — Solutions

If the United States wanted to improve the care of its youngest children, right now, what could it do?

- One answer may exist in North Carolina, where the Smart Start program is infusing \$60 million of state tax money into child care.

- Another may exist in the military. The Pentagon spends \$204 million a year on its day care centers to make them among the best in the nation.

- Where are the dads in all this? Their increased role could help, but we're not likely to see a Working Father magazine any time soon.

- And finally, there's you, the consumer. We'll present a checklist on how you can identify good quality in a day care center or home.

Debating maternal correctness

The mommy wars are still simmering

By Mackenzie Carpenter
and Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



One night last year, Judy Limitaanen Evans, longtime PTA member, stay-at-home mother and a candidate for Mt. Lebanon's school board, was asked a question at a meeting.

Why were so many PTA activities scheduled during the day, when many working mothers couldn't make it?

Evans, who is known for being blunt-spoken, didn't hesitate.

"Because stay-at-home moms would be cranky if they were scheduled at night," Evans said.

Her comments caused a buzz among the handful of employed mothers at the meeting, but when quizzed about it later, Evans was unrepentant.

"If we hold [PTA] meetings at night, nobody shows up, so why cater to the one person who would come? Not that working moms don't shoulder some of the burden, but they sometimes forget how tired we are too," Evans said.

Welcome to the "mommy wars," circa 1996. Its combatants: the mom who chauffeurs the kids to soccer and staffs the bake sales, and the mom who doesn't, because she goes to a job each day.

They both work — one for free, one for a paycheck. They're both tired. They're both trying to be good mothers. But they're not quite sure how they feel about each other.

What's going on here?

Ambivalence, said Judsen Culbreth, managing editor of Working Mother magazine. The United States today has "the biggest group of women that ever worked outside of the home for a salary, and we still don't know what to make of it."

A lot of people in America still believe that mothers should stay home and take care of their children.

A Pennsylvania Poll done in April by the Post-Gazette and KDKA-TV showed that 58 percent of the 1,399 polled felt that children

would be better off if their mothers were at home full-time.

Significantly, those who have had young children at home in the last five years favored the full-time mother option almost as strongly as other adults.

Yet in Pennsylvania, 53 percent of all children under 6 are in families where their parents work — which means that many of those who prefer full-time motherhood can't or don't exercise that option.

These mixed emotions, and the anxiety they cause, are ripe for exploitation, and you don't have to look far to see it in action.

Syndicated radio talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger, who made her early reputation by castigating employed mothers, still identifies herself with the tag, "I'm my kid's mom." (Schlessinger, the mother of a grade-school-age son, stayed out of the work force for several years when he was younger).

Pat Robertson and the religious right blame many of society's ills on working mothers. Nannies have gone on "Oprah" to denounce the women who employ them as spoiled and uncaring.

These criticisms, and the defensive responses by women on both sides of the issue, were first called the "mommy wars" when Newsweek used the term in a cover story in 1990, complete with a photo of women wearing boxing gloves. While the concept may be partly a media invention, it nevertheless captures the simmering conflicts between mothers who are employed and mothers who aren't.

A survey in Child magazine picked up signs of the tension in 1989, when it found that 49 percent of stay-at-home mothers believed employed mothers did not spend enough time with their children.

This strain between working and nonworking women is mostly confined to middle and upper-middle class communities, because that's where women can afford to exercise the option of staying home.

A good example is Upper St. Clair, where 1990 census figures showed 59 percent of all children under 6 were in households where

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only dad worked, mostly because they were "lucky enough that our husbands got on that fast track at work so we could be at home with our kids," according to PTA Council President Miriam Richardson.

The stay-at-home mom quotient is not quite that high elsewhere in the region, but it still exceeds the national average. In Allegheny County, 46.1 percent of all children 6 and under live in households where mom is at home, compared with 40 percent nationally, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Mt. Lebanon is another community where the majority of young children — 54 percent — have mothers at home. Devra Bastiaens, who quit her practice as a psychiatrist to stay at home with her two children, is one of them.

Bastiaens said she has made sacrifices to exercise her choice. "We live in a modest home," she said. "I clip coupons, look for sales. We are not extravagant."

While she believes she did the right thing, she tries not to be judgmental about moms who work.

"I think some people are better parents because they work," she said. "It's not for everyone. But I can't do it all. I can't be a Hillary Clinton. I don't feel I can do the best I can do if I have too many things going on."

While Bastiaens may try to be understanding toward working moms, others in the community don't.

When Laura Tiedge ran a losing campaign as a Democrat for school board against the longtime Republican slate in Mt. Lebanon, she was asked repeatedly why she was running.

"You work full time," they would say to me. "How can you do it all? Don't you feel guilty about this?" And my reply was always, "There have been men on the school board for years, and most of them work, and what's the difference?"

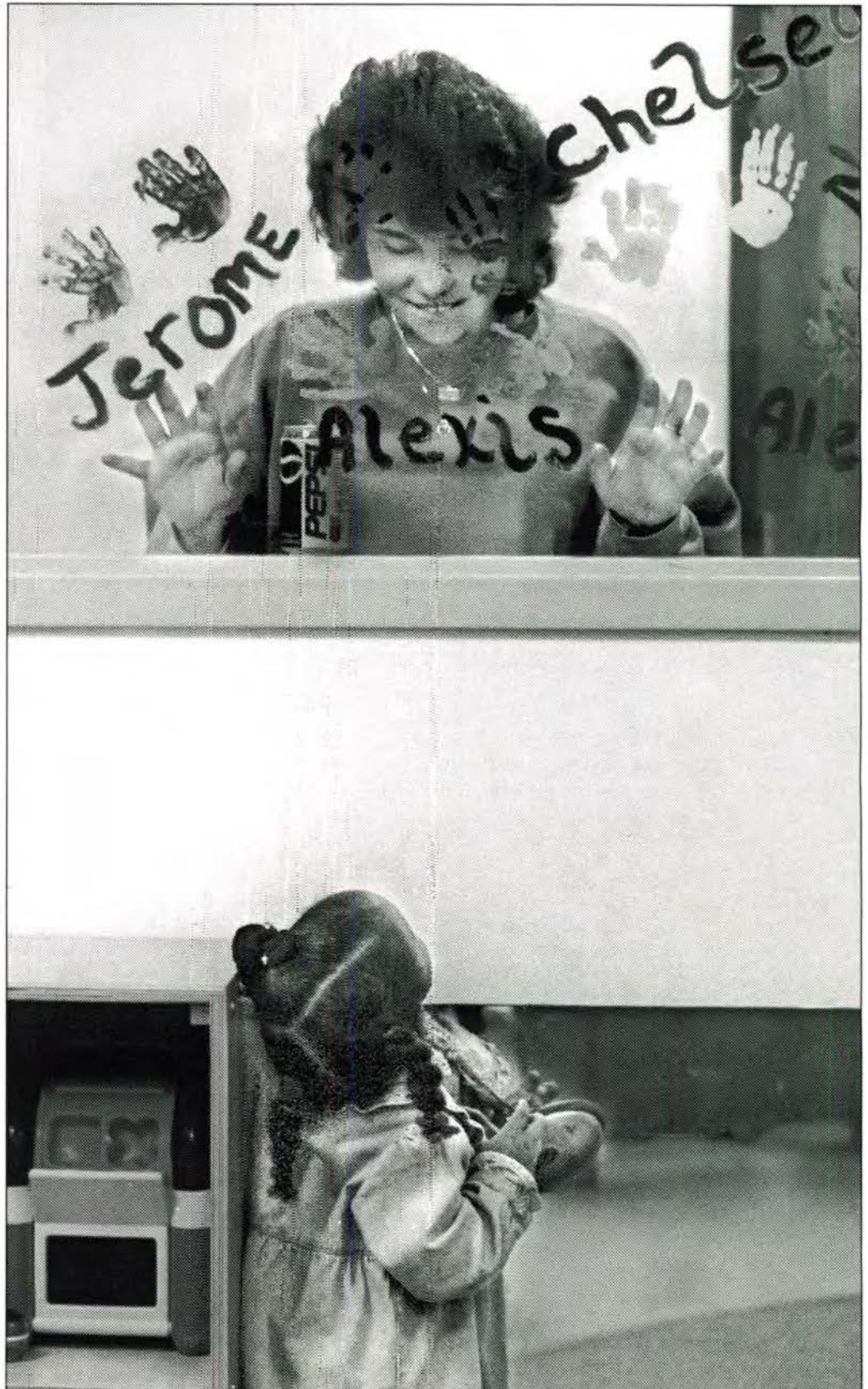
"There's a lot of prejudice against mothers who work full-time in this community," she said.

Will there ever be a truce in this battle of maternal correctness?

Some believe one already is in the

Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Tammi Vecchio, an assistant group supervisor at Child Care on Smithfield, stops by a classroom window to say hello to Alexis Boyden, 2. The Downtown center is one of the premier child care facilities in the region.



Voicing opinions on day care

In April, The Pennsylvania Poll, conducted by the Post-Gazette and KDKA-TV, asked people two day care questions. The respondents were divided between those who had had young children in their households within the last five years, and those who had not. Here are the results:



A public opinion survey
and analysis of the
**Pittsburgh
Post-Gazette
& KDKA**

WOULD YOUNG CHILDREN BE BETTER OFF WITH A MOTHER WHO WAS AT HOME FULL-TIME, AT WORK PART-TIME, OR AT WORK FULL-TIME?

	People with young children in household in last 5 years	People without young children in last 5 years	Status unknown	TOTAL
Full-time home	300	498	12	810 (58%)
Part-time work	189	205	3	397 (28%)
Full-time work	36	55	0	91 (7%)
Don't know	30	69	2	101 (7%)

SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT DO MORE TO HELP WITH DAY CARE?

	People with young children in household in last 5 years	People without young children in last 5 years	Status unknown	TOTAL
Do more	341	394	3	738 (53%)
Does enough now	142	332	13	487 (35%)
Don't know	72	103	1	176 (12%)

works, as stay-at-home mothers feel more valued.

Consider, for example, the evolution of the title of FEMALE, a national support group for stay-at-home mothers. It began as an acronym for Formerly Employed Mothers at Loose Ends. It's now known as Formerly Employed Mothers on the Leading Edge.

One member of a local FEMALE chapter gave this take on the issue:

"There is no 'mommy wars'; the media made it up," said Julie Newman, 38, mother of a 5-year-old boy. "Some *guy* made it up," she added with a snort.

Motherhood is "a continuum," said Newman, who once owned a travel agency. "In Vienna, there are eight or nine or 15 ways of drinking coffee, from

a little bit of milk, to a little more, to milk with whipped cream and cinnamon.

"Moms are the same way. You don't have all stay-at-homes and all full-timers, you have a little bit of one thing and a little bit of another, and then a little more all across the spectrum."

But FEMALE member Mary Fields, former lawyer and mother of a little boy, still chafes at the memory of a friend asking "if I stay at home all day and watch television."

"The truth is, women make it harder on other women. I personally believe we should make the choice that's right for us and not be defensive about those choices. But if the 'mommy wars' is over, I haven't seen it yet."



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full-time day care is *disgusting*," she told a visitor, while calmly sipping coffee in the library of her home. "Because we know it's wrong. We know it's wrong for babies, for those who care for them, for the parents."

"Children First" is not a child care manual. It is a political manifesto, chastising society for all the ways it neglects children: from leaving them in poverty to corporal punishment to rigid workplace demands on parents.

But Leach's statements about day care drew flak from feminists, researchers and parents — criticisms that clearly still rankled her.

In the media, and in certain academic and public policy circles, "if you utter anything that can be construed in opposition to day care for any child under any circumstances and you're any kind of an authority with parents, people are going to scream and get out their revolvers," she growled in her throaty Glenda Jackson voice.

On the other hand, "I have never been against day care," she said. "It would be insane if I were. I used day care for my own children." Last year, she spent two days visiting one Houston, Texas, center that she described as "well-resourced, beautifully set out."

"I never said it can't be done. But to meet the needs of babies under one year is very difficult, and the difficulty about doing it is it costs too much," she said.

Despite her disclaimers that not all day care is bad, Leach "has a strong personality, and what she said came across as dogmatic," said Judsen Culbreth, editor of *Working Mother* magazine. "There was a lot of distress and guilt after that book came out."

Leach also horrified some American child development researchers when she wrote that even good day care for infants and toddlers often deprived them of maternal attention.

That is a "grossly simplistic statement that emotionalizes the issue," said Deborah Phillips of the National Academy of Sciences.

Phillips, a noted child development researcher who is helping to coordinate a massive study into that very question, did not read the book.

"I didn't have the stomach to read it, actually," she said.

But she does not believe that Leach accu-

"An awful lot of American children under age 5 are having a perfectly lousy time, whether they're in day care, whether they're with reluctant grandmothers whose arms are being twisted because they don't really want to do it, whether they're at home with mothers who don't have enough money and are bored and fed up."

Penelope Leach

ately represents what the research literature says.

The initial results from a nine-state study being coordinated by the National Institute of Child Health and Development showed that if babies have good relationships with their mothers, even poor day care does not make them insecure.

But Leach thinks even the finest day care for an infant can't match good parental care. "Mothers start out with an irreplaceable bio-emotional advantage in relating to their infants, and fathers start out with a lesser one that still puts them ahead of any outsider," she wrote.

And, she added, several other recent studies have reaffirmed her view that most day care falls far short of the ideal.

Too often, she complained, academicians and policy-makers turn to day care as the first answer when confronted with the needs of the two-income family, without asking whether it's the best way to meet the needs of children.

Why not think about ways to promote active parenting by working mothers and fathers by granting them parental leaves or flexible schedules?

No matter what the approach — paid leave in the first year, working from home,

part-time work, satellite workplaces, or job sharing — the aim should be to provide more parental presence in children's lives while acknowledging the parents' need to work. Sweden, for example, provides paid leaves for each parent that last 18 months, and part-time workdays for either parent until a child is 8.

But using Sweden, or any other place, as a model for Americans doesn't go over well with some of Leach's colleagues.

Brazelton said in a recent interview that he doesn't think Leach "has a real grip on what's going on in this country."

Brazelton has said it's best for mothers to stay home with their infant children if possible, but he declines to push the point further.

Working parents, he said, "need all the support they can get. What you're not talking about is what it means to parents to leave a 4-month-old baby with another caregiver. They must grieve, and that interferes with the at-

tachment process [of parents and child], and to load them with more guilt just isn't helpful," he said.

Despite all the initial fuss, it appears that "Children First" has had only limited impact. Several countries have conducted research studies to find out if the benefits of paying for parental leave would outweigh its costs, but the Republican-dominated Congress here isn't about to consider government-subsidized parental leaves.

Months after the uproar, Leach still feels that those who assaulted her for criticizing day care missed her point.

"My basic message is about choice, because if there is one thing we really do know, it's that a baby needs to be cared for by somebody who likes doing it and likes him.

"An awful lot of American children under age 5 are having a perfectly lousy time, whether they're in day care, whether they're with reluctant grandmothers whose arms are being twisted because they don't really want to do it, whether they're at home with mothers who don't have enough money and are bored and fed up.

"That's what you need to be saying to your readers. We've just got to think of how we can do better for our very smallest children."

National day care was gone in a veto

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

As many parents struggle to pay for day care, they might be surprised to know that 25 years ago, under President Richard M. Nixon, child care almost became an entitlement program for all working parents.

And they might be surprised to know that the catalyst for it was welfare reform — of the same variety that we have today.

Edward Zigler, one of the founders of Head Start, now head of Yale University's Bush Center for Child Development, remembers it well.

Zigler was then working in the Nixon White House as the first-ever director of the Office of Child Development. Zigler told his bosses "you can't talk welfare reform without child care," because good child care would be necessary for welfare recipients to go out and find jobs.

So Zigler crafted a companion bill to the welfare proposal — Nixon's Family Assistance Plan — that would have established a network of federally funded and regulated centers, available to all, with a sliding fee schedule based on ability to pay.

Legislation was introduced to set up the centers, and \$2 billion was authorized to fund them.

"We were bedazzled by Denmark and Sweden," which had already established modern, tax-subsidized day care centers, Zigler remembered.



Edward Zigler

The child care legislation passed both houses of Congress, prompting Zigler and his colleagues to break out the champagne.

But then support in the White House for the original welfare reform proposal began to falter. And soon, conservative groups began to complain about the child care component. Columnist James J. Kilpatrick wrote that the bill would make sense "in the context of a Sovietized society," and warned that if Nixon signed it, "he will have forfeited his last frail claim on Middle America's sup-

port."

So, Nixon vetoed the child care bill. His top speech-writer, Patrick Buchanan, wrote the veto message, declaring that "for the federal government to plunge headlong financially into supporting child development would commit the vast moral authority of the national government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing over against the family-centered approaches."

And that was the closest that the United States ever came to providing what every other Western industrialized nation has in some form: state-subsidized, universally available day care.

In some ways, Zigler said today, he is relieved.

"I'm almost 25 years older, and a little smarter," he said. Federally supported day care "was probably not the way to go. I can say now, with the wisdom of hindsight, that we've learned that these things need to be solved on the state level."

So how much would it cost, annually, for us to provide quality child care?

"Oh, about \$70 billion, at a minimum."

Do not choke, he said. Consider that the minute a child enters the public school system, we spend about \$5,600 on average for his or her schooling every year. For the 44 million students enrolled in 1994-95, that totaled \$247.4 billion for that year alone.

"If we can afford to pay that for 13 years for each child, there must be some mechanisms to pay for it for the first five years of life," he said.

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Stacy Regan says she would not trade the quality time she gets with her children for any job. She says there isn't anything more satisfying than the hours she spends with her four children, including Peter, 3, at top, and Ellen Vannen, 1.

'I believe mothers should stay at home'

She says financial sacrifices have been greatly rewarded



The only close encounter that any of Stacey Regan's four children ever have with a day care center is the one at the McIntyre Square Giant Eagle in the North Hills.

And only for about 45 minutes, while Regan races through her weekly supermarket routine.

Regan, 38, is a stay-at-home mom with attitude. Smart, brisk, with a sharp chin and a perky Texas twang, she rejects the diplomatic I-wouldn't-presume-to-judge-other-people's-choices mantra of some moms.

"I believe mothers should stay at home," she said flatly.

"We're wired differently. My husband is awesome with the kids, but the overwhelming percentage of people in the teaching profession, in nursing, in any nurturing profession, are women. We're more nurturing with children. They want mom first."

story by

mackenzie carpenter



photographs by

annie o'neill

And besides, she added, "one of the reasons a lot of women work is because staying at home is hard ... and you get to wear clothes that no one is going to spit up on."

Regan is full-time mom to Sean, 7, Kelsey, 5, Peter, 3 and Ellen Vannen, 1, but it wasn't always this way. She has an extensive work resume: a teacher's certificate, plus experience in insurance and investment counseling.

And for seven years, Regan helped run several day care centers

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Patrick Regan's job as a musician often takes him out of town, but the plus side of that is the hardy welcomes he receives from his family like one at left at Pittsburgh International Airport. Above, Kelsey Regan, 5, shows the ornery side that keeps life at home exciting for Mom.

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Sean, 7, the oldest of the Regans' four children, has recently begun learning how to play the violin.

in Texas, where she was responsible for teaching parents about child development. It was not a happy experience for her.

"To see children come in first thing in the morning, or after school, and wait for their parents until 6:15 at night, every night ... to see that multiplied over and over and over again was just too painful."

So, when she married husband Patrick, they agreed that she would stay home, even if it meant cutting their income in half.

The Regans live in a Victorian house on the North Side that they bought for \$8,000

with the help of an Urban Renewal Authority loan. The house needs a lot of work, but the mortgage payments are manageable. It was all part of a plan to live cheaply while Patrick, a nationally noted bagpipe player, studied for his degree in music at Carnegie Mellon University.

Their monthly income is erratic because of the uncertainty of Patrick Regan's appearances at myriad festivals and weddings and schools. So they have learned to weather the lean months by buying 10-pound bags of rice at Giant Eagle, bananas on sale, a

second-hand car.

Stacey Regan said she is a living rebuttal of the argument that most employed mothers work because they must.

"I think people can do without a lot more than they think," she said.

Despite the lack of money, the lack of time for herself, "I'm still at home!" Regan said triumphantly. "And dad gum it, I'm going to be here. They are not shipping me out the door to earn a minimum wage, or to teach other folks' kids so I can pay someone to watch mine."

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Linda Backo gets a good night kiss from her 2-year-old son, Michael, while trying to keep a handle on 1-year-old Stephen. Below, Backo and her husband, Gary, drop 5-year-old Joseph off at a day care center near the couple's home in Baldwin Borough.

Three kids, two jobs, no guilt

*She says her children prove
she's doing her job at home, too*



Linda Backo has three children, ages 5, 2 and 1, and a fourth on the way. She has a full-time job as an engineer for Westinghouse, a husband who manages a Revco store, a house in Baldwin Borough — and a plane to catch in two hours for a business trip to Indiana.

She also has something else: no guilt. "I went back to work when each of the boys was 6 weeks old, and I never had any guilt," said Backo. In fact, she added, "I was ready."

Backo, 32, is due to deliver her fourth child this month and intends to begin working again by September.

But at the moment, she had more immediate concerns, like making her plane, which meant finishing the shrimp casserole for her husband to pop in the

story by
sally kalson

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robin rombach

oven that night.

Backo would be doing three things at once even if she weren't pulling down a paycheck 40 hours a week. She sews her own maternity clothes as well as her children's Christmas, Easter and Halloween outfits. She cooks on weekends for the coming week and helps out with

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Mom at work: Linda Backo is a senior engineer at Westinghouse, and a mother of three with another on the way. While her day might include meetings like the one above at the Westinghouse plant in Cheswick, it is also filled with reminders of her growing family. At her desk, she keeps up-to-date pictures of, from left, Joseph, 5, Michael, 2, Stephen, 1, and the child she carries inside her, as depicted by a sonogram.

Sunday school classes at St. Albert the Great, where the family rarely misses a service.

"My husband's always telling me I do too much," she said, "but I'm very detail-oriented. I guess it's the engineer in me. I can't stand it if the navy blues in the kids outfits don't match perfectly."

On the other hand, there's no use going overboard. "My house is usually a mess," she confided.

Backo has never doubted her decision to continue her job.

"Some women are better at-home mothers; I'm a better at-work mother," she said. "One way is not superior to another. Every family is different. I don't see any sense in women judging each other."

"I figure if my kids are good kids, well-behaved and happy — which they are — then I'm doing my job whether I'm at work or not."

Like many families, the Backos use a variety of child care arrangements. At first, their sons attended a family day care home. Now the two youngest go to a child care center near their house three days a week, 9½ hours a day, and the oldest joins them when he finishes half-day kindergarten (cost: \$190 a week).

They spend the other two days with their dad, Gary, or his mother, who lives up the street.

"Our schedule is busy, but we're organized," Backo said. "It works."

Backo not only enjoys her job, she appreciates the safety cushion it affords her family. They live modestly, driving used cars and banking a chunk of their income every month.

"Saving for the future is really important to us," Backo said. "We couldn't do that on one income, just like we couldn't live where we live."



Linda Backo and her husband, Gary, drop 5-year-old Joseph off at a day care center near the couple's home in Baldwin Borough.

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Daniel Marsula/Post-Gazette

Typecasting the moms

Did you know there are four types of moms? Judsen Culbreth, managing editor of Working Mother magazine, says that market researchers for advertisers and publishers have come up with this list:

1) THE CONTENTED TRADITIONALIST. A happy stay-at-home mom. Well-educated, often affluent but not always so, involved with the PTA, the Junior League. She feels rewarded and fulfilled. She is supported by her husband. If she doesn't have a lot of money, she takes great pride in her economical homemaking skills.

2) THE WORRIED TRADITIONALIST. This stay-at-home mom wants to be home, but feels the financial pinch more acutely, and more importantly, doesn't feel she is getting the support she needs either from her husband and family, or from the community at large. She feels society and the media,

with its emphasis on working "supermoms," have largely deserted her.

3) THE JUST-A-JOB MOM. This is the worried traditionalist who had to go to work. She'd stay home in a minute if she could afford it. She is more frequently a secretary or factory worker than a manager. Her husband doesn't help much with the chores or the kids. She is the "second shift" mom, whose second job begins the minute she sets foot in the door. The media tends to profile her a lot.

4) THE CAREER-COMMITTED WORKING MOM. This is a woman from the contented traditionalist's income and educational bracket who wanted to go to work; she's happy, loves her job, gets lots of support from her husband. Are her kids happy? She thinks so, although it isn't always easy. But she feels a great sense of pride that she's accomplishing it all.

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They are agonizing — and important — questions for many mothers of infants: How soon do I go back to work? Will my baby get the care he or she needs? They were questions faced recently by Gretchen and David Stubenvoll when Gretchen returned to work. The Stubenvolls took their infant daughter, Emily, to the day care center at American Thermoplastic Co. in O'Hara. During this trial run, Emily is being fed by day care worker Donna Lindsey, with the help of Sean Roy, 1.

Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

What do babies need?

Infants require nurturing many centers can't provide

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



In 1983, this scene unfolded every morning Downtown at the Smithfield United Church, when the doors opened at 7 a.m.

Out came the homeless women who'd spent the night at Bethlehem Haven, the shelter in the church basement, carrying their worldly possessions in shopping bags.

In went the business-suited mothers on

their way to work, wheeling their infants in strollers, to stop at the day care center in the church.

And when the two groups passed, "I got all kinds of grief from the bag ladies about putting my baby in day care," recalled Valerie Schultz, an administrative assistant at Alcoa, who still sounds incredulous. "They would say, 'How could you do that to your child?' And I would think, 'What's wrong with this picture?'"

Today, Schultz said, despite all the admonitions at the church door, her son is a well-

adjusted 13-year-old. But at the time, she wasn't sure things would turn out so well.

"Back then you felt you were doing the unkindest thing to your child," she said. "We were the 'Father Knows Best' generation."

Looking back, she's not sure she'd do it again.

"The whole parade was so exhausting: getting up early, packing the food and clothes and lunch, working all day on the edge of your seat. You were always worried. What if your baby gets sick? What if the day care center closes? What will you do?"

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The one bright spot was Louise Child Care, operators of the church center.

"The staff really knew what they were doing and they were so supportive of us mothers," she said. "They were our partners in child care."

Infant care booming

In some ways infant care has changed dramatically since Schultz needed it. And in other ways it hasn't changed at all.

New moms who go back to work are still exhausted, worried and working on the edge of their seats. Their guilt level still depends a lot on how much faith they have in the caregivers.

But employed mothers of infants have a lot more company these days — 53 percent of mothers return to the workplace within a year of their babies' births.

That means that more babies than ever are being placed in child care. In 1977, infants (birth-to-12 months) and young toddlers (1-to-2 years) made up only 14 percent of the population in day care centers. By 1988, the percentage had climbed to 30.

The good news is that high-quality infant care is better than it's ever been, largely because of what we've learned about brain development during the first year of life.

Those 12 months, new research has confirmed, are critical to a child's development. Good infant care programs have used these findings to fashion programs of maximum benefit to babies.

But the bad news is that most infants in daylong care are not getting this high-quality nurturing. The gap was reported in stark terms by the Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes study of 1994, conducted by researchers at four universities across the country.

The largest study of day care centers done up to that time, it looked at 225 infant or toddler rooms and found only 8 percent met the good-quality level, while 40 percent were "less than minimal."

In these low-quality rooms, the report said, babies got sick more often because of poor sanitation in diapering and feeding; were endangered by safety problems; lacked warm, supportive relationships with adults that are the bedrock of a child's emerging identity; and lacked books and toys that stimulate intellectual growth.

A year earlier, the Carnegie Corporation reported that much of what was provided by relatives and family child care homes was "substandard" in many of the same ways. It called infant care in America "a quiet crisis."

These trends point to a child care colli-

sion: More babies at younger ages going into mediocre or poor care, just when they need good care the most.

Your baby or your job

Most people — parents and experts alike — believe it would be best for babies to spend at least the first 6 to 12 months with a competent, loving parent, usually mom.

But that belief is not reflected in the workplace or the law. Few employers offer paid maternity leave beyond six weeks of disability, and Congress has rejected efforts to increase that support.

Of course, women can always stay home without pay — if they can still cover the bills, and if they don't mind the risk of being permanently replaced at work.

Moreover, 30 percent of today's children are living with single parents. For many of those mothers, the only way to stay home is to go on welfare, and that option is shrinking due to welfare reform.

And in an economy rife with job insecurity, even women who don't "have to work" in the financial sense often feel they must.

"Even 13 years ago, I kept working because I was afraid not to," said Valerie Schultz, whose husband was then a corporate attorney and is now a vice president.

"It was an insurance policy," she continued. "Corporate America is unpredictable. You never knew what would happen tomorrow. That's truer now than ever."

The economic necessity for many mothers to return to work early can be hard on them.

At Youngworld, a center at the Westin William Penn Downtown, Director Lisa Mahoney said that "the younger the baby, the harder it is on the parent. Most moms are very emotional when they leave the baby with us. I think it would be better if they could stay home for at least three months."

But Sherry Cleary, director of the University of Pittsburgh's Child Development Center, said an infant can settle into day care more easily than a 15-month-old.

So where are all these babies going?

About 45 percent of the nation's 4.1 million infants were in some kind of non-parental care last year, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

About 24 percent were with relatives. Another 17 percent were in nonrelative care — 3 percent in the baby's home, and 14 percent in someone else's.

And 7 percent were in center-based programs. The numbers overlap because some children were in more than one type of care.

The remaining 55 percent were considered to be in parental care — but only because they didn't show up elsewhere. No

one knows how many of those babies are actually in illegal day care — places that operate underground to escape regulation and taxes. Experts say these settings are often the most overcrowded, with the worst-trained staff and the most hazardous conditions.

A baby's brain

Good parents are able to give their infants most of what they need without a lot of training. They caress and talk to them, respond positively to their gurgles and smiles, give them interesting objects and books to see and touch, keep them warm and safe, and bond with them in the process — all without a master's degree in child development.

Interestingly enough, it turns out that these interactions are exactly what babies need to help their brains develop most fully during this formative period, when growth is faster and the "window" is open wider than it will ever be again.

How an infant is stimulated during this crucial time actually determines how his brain's nerve cells, or neurons, connect with one another.

Neurons that are stimulated become integrated into the brain's circuitry, creating the pathways that enable motor development, emotional control, vision, social attachment and vocabulary.

Neurons that are not used may die, making it that much harder — though not impossible — for a baby to develop normally in these areas.

These early experiences are so powerful, pediatric neurobiologist Harry Chugani of Wayne State University told Newsweek magazine, "they can completely change the way a person turns out."

Natural nurturers?

But here we come to a perceptual problem that has a profound effect on infant care: If babies get perfectly good nurturing from parents who fly primarily on instinct, then why, when they go into day care, do they suddenly need a caregiver with training in child development?

Many would say they don't.

"In American society, infant-toddler care is not considered a profession," lamented J. Ronald Lally, director of the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers at WestEd/Far West Laboratory in Sausalito, Calif.

"It is seen as care that anyone can do, that until recently was done for no pay as part of daily family life, and that needs no training."

Added Martha Isler, formerly of the YWCA Child Care Partnerships in Pittsburgh, "Peo-

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ple talk about 'watching' children, as if the job meant making sure they didn't escape."

But this view has two large flaws.

First, lots of parents don't fly well on instinct. The child abuse statistics prove the point.

And second, taking care of someone else's baby — or babies, as is often the case — is very different from taking care of your own.

Women make up 97 percent of the day care work force in the United States, "but it is a terrible mistake to think that all women are assured a natural wellspring of motherliness that extends to all children," said Jerlean Daniels, assistant professor of child development and child care at the University of Pittsburgh.

The greatest mother in the world will not necessarily extend the same nurturing to babies she's being paid to take care of, particularly when there are three or four of them and her pay is barely above minimum wage.

"That's where the training comes in," Daniels said. "If you're going to take care of babies, then you ought to understand what babies need and how to provide it."

Good care is . . .

So how is a parent supposed to measure the quality of infant care, beyond the bedrock issues of cleanliness and safety?

Three factors are especially important in infant care, the experts say: low ratios of children to caregivers, small group size and consistency in caregivers.

Babies need more attention than older children. In Pennsylvania, the maximum ratio of infants to caregivers is four-to-one. But three-to-one is the number recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, or NAEYC, which sets voluntary standards for high-quality care.

Also, the chaos of large groups is not good for children even when there are plenty of adults to care for them. Group size may be defined as the number of babies doing the same thing at the same time, not necessarily the number in the room. Pennsylvania regulations allow no more than eight infants in a group, the same number recommended by NAEYC.

Finally, consistency of caregivers helps babies form good attachments with key adults. This means two things: the infant room should have the same, steady cast of caregivers every day; and, when possible, those caregivers should have primary responsibility for certain babies.

Some child care authorities even recommend keeping the same caregivers with children from birth to age 3 to maximize the sense of security.

In Pittsburgh, only Louise Child Care, which operates 11 centers, follows this practice. Other centers, even those known for quality, don't.

"Our infant caregivers have been with us between eight and 14 years. They're wonderful with babies, but they really don't want to be chasing after 3-year-olds," said Natalie Kaplan, whose infant-toddler programs at the Carriage House in Squirrel Hill and the Children's Center of Pittsburgh in Oakland have cared for about 400 babies in the past 14 years.

Mark Bibro, director of Louise Child Care, acknowledges that three-year pairing may not seem practical for all centers. But he said the evidence is compelling enough to make it worth doing.

"Through our own videotaped observations, we've seen that children respond better when they recognize the caregiver," Bibro said. "If they can form good attachments the first three years, we believe it will help them form good attachments as adults."

Is there danger ahead?

What about that majority of babies in child care who are not getting excellent attention? Will they grow up to be a generation of walking wounded?

Preliminary studies are offering some reassurance. New findings released by the National Institute of Child Health and Development earlier this spring showed that day care doesn't hurt an infant emotionally as long as mom has a good relationship with her child, and that women don't necessarily need to go back to a 1950s lifestyle to be good mothers.

In fact, some experts have noted that during the postwar era, while many mothers were happy and loving, many others were depressed, bored to tears, distracted, exhausted, absorbed by the soap operas, immersed in volunteer work, ground down by financial struggle or living with abusive husbands.

In her 1992 book, "The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap," Stephanie Coontz noted that even in 1956, the Ladies' Home Journal devoted an entire issue to "The Plight of the Young Mother." That same year, McCall's set a new readership record with its cover story about "The Mother Who Ran Away."

Clearly, then, the generation now approaching 50 did not receive uniformly excellent nurturing in infancy, any more than their parents did, or theirs before them.

So why should there be such hand-wringing that so many babies in day care are getting less than top-quality care?

One answer: the mass influx of babies into regulated settings makes child care less the sole preserve of the family and more a matter of public concern.

And as a public matter, experts insist, it makes sense to raise community standards so that children in day care get the best nurturing possible in the first year of life — when it counts the most.



When the big day arrived to go to day care, at least two of the Stubenvolls were nervous.

Tough day for working mom

When a new mother returns to professional life, planning ahead helps ease the pain

Met Gretchen Stubenvoll, corporate attorney, who reviews intellectual property documents and faxes agreements overseas.

Now meet Gretchen Stubenvoll, mother of tiny Emily, who sits in the dark, rocking her baby and crying.

The two alter egos collided one November evening as Stubenvoll's maternity leave was about to end.

The idyllic period of bonding, broken by occasional lawyerly work from home, was almost over. In a few days, 8-week-old Emily would be entering child care and her mother would be back at her desk at Medrad Inc.

Everything was in place for the kind of transition most women only dream of: flexible job schedule (three days at headquar-

story by
sally kalson



photographs by
robin rombach

ters, two working at home); supportive husband with a high-ranking position and flexible hours of his own; high-quality day care for Emily just 10 minutes from the office; plenty of income to pay for it.

Even so, Stubenvoll sat in the dark, rocking and roiling with doubt: Was she doing the right thing? Could she make this arrangement work for her family and com-

pany?

The ego collision wasn't an all-out wreck, just a fender-bender, and a common one for new moms who feel torn between the children they love and the jobs they want to keep.

The next day, Stubenvoll did what thousands of women do every day in this country, where the typical maternity leave is six weeks of paid disability: She popped the dent out of her emotional chassis and rededicated herself to the path she'd chosen 11 months earlier, when — in the third week of her new job as Medrad's only lawyer — she'd discovered she was pregnant.

Choosing both paths

"I always knew I wanted a career and family," Stubenvoll said in the living room of

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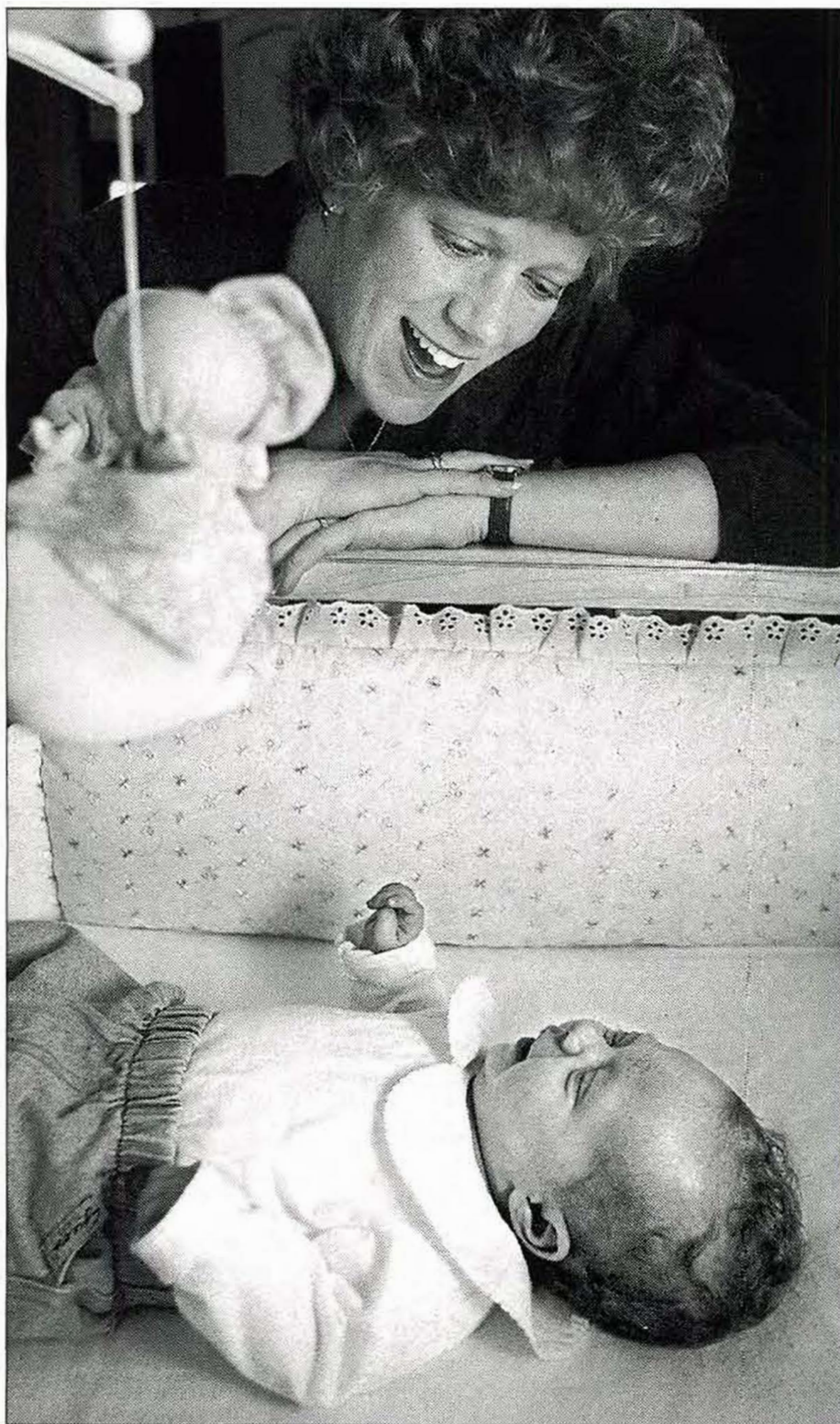


Above, it's a big day for baby, and for Mom and Dad. Gretchen and David Stubenvoll introduce their 8-week-old baby, Emily, to Donna Lindsey, who quickly catches Emily's attention. At left is Lindsey's supervisor, LaVerne Synan, director of the child care center at American Thermoplastic Co. Taking care of the details helps make Gretchen Stubenvoll feel more secure about Emily's day care experience. At left, she looks over the freshness dates of Emily's lunch with LaVerne Synan.

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Gretchen Stubenvoll's maternity leave afforded her much-appreciated time to bond with Emily. At left, mother and daughter spend some relaxing time on the last day of Stubenvoll's leave. She returned to work as a corporate attorney the next day, and Emily spent her first full day in child care.

her homey Squirrel Hill duplex, where the mantle was still crammed with new-baby cards, "so it was only a matter of time before they crashed together. I just didn't think they'd crash so soon.

"Life is full of choices and we've made the choice to continue our two careers," she said, nodding toward her husband, David Stubenvoll, chief financial officer of GALT Technologies.

"I believe I can be a good lawyer and a good mother," Stubenvoll said firmly. "I'm not fitting my child into my career; I'm trying to meld the two together."

Emily gazed up at her mother with the drunken contentment that follows a long feeding and a good burp.

"But it's still hard," Stubenvoll conceded, gazing back.

"I guess you can never know how hard it will be until you go through it. Nothing can prepare you for the intensity. It's not like any other connection in life.

"I always thought David and I would share child care 50-50. But once she was born, equality went out the window. He'll support me and help me, but I want the primary responsibility. Other people might deny it, but I won't. There really is something to biology."

Given the option, would she stay home longer? Stubenvoll looked doubtful. "I'd like to, but there's too much work that has to get done," she said.

What if someone else could do the work?

"Then why would they need me?"

What if the work could be done by someone else temporarily but her job would still be secure for, say, eight months?

"Then I'd take the whole eight months," she said. "But where does that exist for lawyers in the real world? Nowhere I've ever heard of."

Let's practice first

Before returning to work, Stubenvoll decides to make a dry run to the day care center. She and her husband will leave Emily there for a few hours while they go out for lunch — their first meal alone since she was born.

The family drives to American Thermoplastic Co. in O'Hara, where CEO Steve Silberman mandated a day care center in the company's new headquarters. The center, spacious and full of light, is run by Louise Child Care, a nonprofit agency that operates 10 other centers in Allegheny County.

State licensing inspection reports show the center has been exemplary, with only three minor violations of the rules. Enrollment is open to nonemployees; Emily will be the second baby in the infant room. Her tuition: \$135 a week.

Stubenvoll meets Donna Lindsey, the infant caregiver, who was not present during her first visit. The two women talk instructions; Stubenvoll runs her eyes around the room, searching for comforting signs. She smiles when she sees Emily's name on her crib.

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After a long first day back on the job, Gretchen Stubenvoll was ready to leave the phones and head to the day care center, where she picked up Emily, who spent the day in the care of Donna Lindsey.



After 15 minutes it's time to go, but Stubenvoll hesitates.

"Everything will be fine," says Laverne Synan, the center director.

"I know," says Stubenvoll, clutching her husband. "I feel pretty good. She's happy ... I'd better leave before I start to cry."

She does anyway, a little; Emily goes right on gurgling at Lindsey as her parents depart.

"The books say that babies in day care bond with someone else," Stubenvoll says, looking back over her shoulder. "They don't replace you, but they're a constant presence. And I thought, 'My God, I never thought about that.'"

The couple returns several hours later. All is well, they're told. Emily's a trooper.

The real thing

The following Monday is D-Day.

It's been sleeting all night; the roads are ribbons of ice. A business-suited Stubenvoll loads Emily into the car and backs out of the driveway at 7:10 a.m.

Twenty minutes later they arrive at Louise; mother hands sleeping baby over to Synan, chats for a few minutes, steels herself and walks with determination out the door.

Back outside, she exhales.

"I'm so glad I brought her here last week," Stubenvoll says. "Otherwise I'd never get through this."

At 8:15 a.m., she walks into her office for the first time in nine weeks. Except for the breast pump in the corner, it's as if she'd never left.

After a quick call to her husband, Stubenvoll looks at her schedule and goes for the files. One co-worker pops his head in to welcome her back and ask about the baby. Otherwise, her return goes unremarked.

She's just as glad about that. "I have to walk a line here,"

she says. "I'm one of the senior women in a company that's almost all men. I'm also the first woman to come back on this kind of schedule after having a

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Even during Gretchen Stubenvoll's maternity leave, the demands of her job often called. Stubenvoll liked holding Emily while she worked, but she knew she would not be afforded this closeness for long.

baby. A low profile right now is just fine."

Any regrets?

"No regrets," she says. "Not today, anyway."

Within the next three months, however, Stubenvoll ran smack into two of the most common problems that beset employed moms and their babies.

First was the departure of Donna Lindsey, the caregiver with whom Emily was bonding. She'd been having problems getting out to O'Hara every day, and had moved to another Louise Child Care center Downtown.

Stubenvoll had been happy with the center, but she found the turnover troubling. Even though she liked Lindsey's replacement, Kerri Williams, she did not like Emily being wrenched away from the face and voice that had become most familiar.

This case, however, had an unusual outcome. Lindsey solved her transportation problems and returned to the center. Most caregivers who leave a center never go back.

The second problem was Stubenvoll's schedule. Three days at the office were not enough for what she wanted to accomplish. So in February, she added another day, putting Emily in day care four

times a week instead of three.

Meanwhile, the infant room had undergone a baby boom. Now there were four babies instead of two, and two caregivers instead of one — still the same ratio of children to adults, but twice the number of infants in the room. That meant a major change in Emily's environment, although not necessarily for the worse.

Stubenvoll says she remains happy with Emily's situation. She likes the physical environment, the health and safety standards, the warmth and quality of care.

She visits almost every day at lunch to play with Emily and talk to the staff.

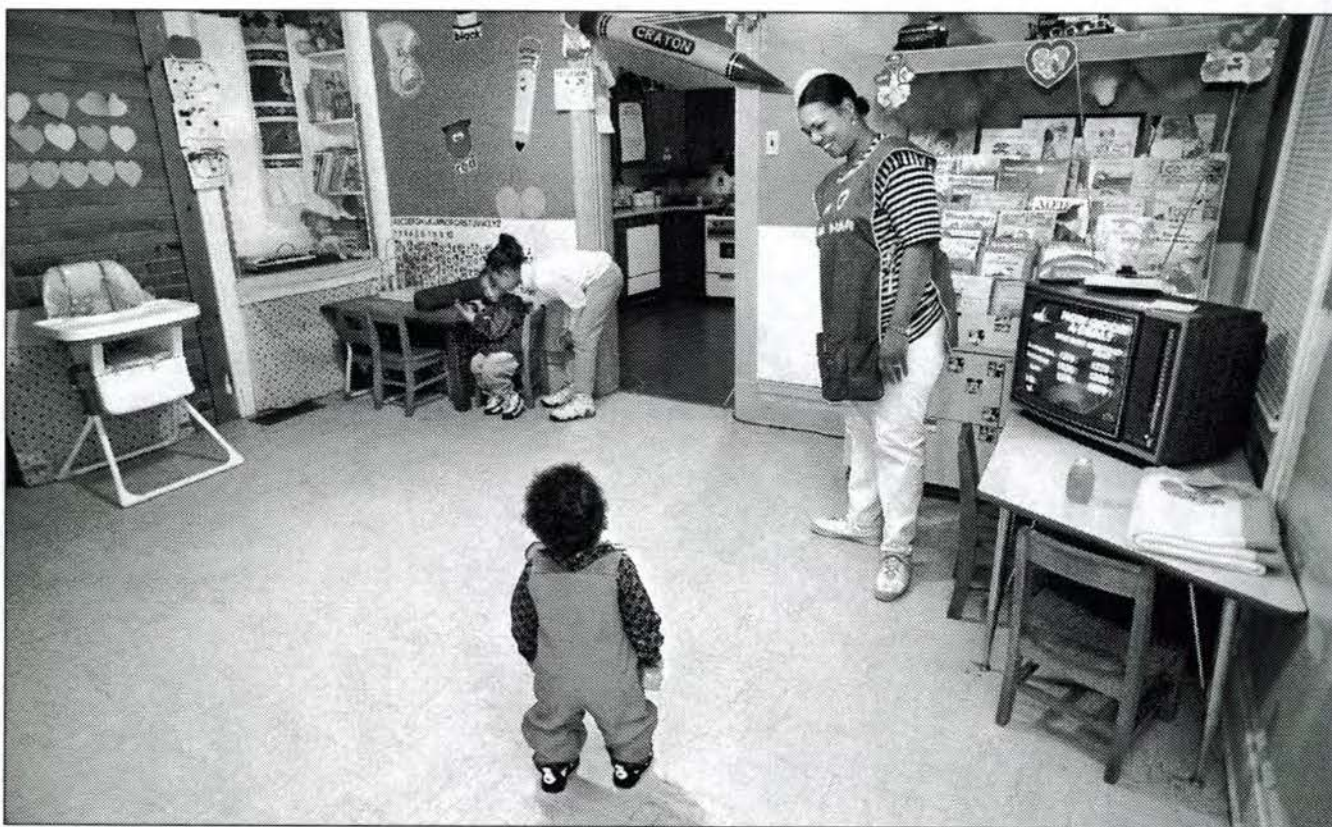
Most importantly, she says, Emily is thriving.

"She loves it there," Stubenvoll said. "When we come in the mornings she's happy to see Donna and Kerri. I have never had to leave her crying once."

"I can tell from the activities that they're really doing good things for her development. And she talks a blue streak" in first-rate baby babble.

"Once in a while I still have my moments. But overall, I'm comfortable that I did the right thing."

Shelley Lee, a caregiver at Papa Bear Child Care center in Wilkinsburg, greets 14-month-old London Heard as he starts his morning at the center. London's mother, Rena Heard, works fulltime Downtown, while London spends his day at Papa Bear.



Limited income creates tough care decisions

Balancing baby's needs while balancing the family budget isn't easy for working single mother

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Rena Heard knew from the beginning that staying home with her baby would not be an option. So she didn't beat herself up about returning to work when her six weeks of paid disability ran out.

"I would have liked more time with him," she said. "But I had no choice, so I didn't agonize over it."

Heard, 33, is a single mother with a college education. She works full-time as a customer service representative at Blue Cross of Western Pennsylvania. She and her son,

London, now 14 months old, live in a two-bedroom apartment in Wilkinsburg.

Staying home, it turned out, was not the only option closed to Heard.

So was the child care subsidy from state and federal block grant money that is supposed to be available to families with incomes between 180 and 235 percent of the federal poverty rate.

On paper, Heard qualifies for the subsidy. But in practice, she has yet to see a penny, and chances are she never will.

That's because the program has 600 people on the waiting list in Allegheny County. Those who are the poorest, often women who have just come off welfare, are desig-

nated Priority I and get funding first. Heard is considered Priority III because of her salary and the child support garnisheed from the paycheck of London's father.

No Priority III families have been funded for almost four years.

Heard's aunt had been caring for London while Heard waited to see if the subsidy would come through. But once it became clear that could take years, Heard began to hunt for a child care center — and discovered another option that was closed to her.

Namely, putting her baby in any of the shiny Downtown centers on the resource list she got from the YWCA.

"I called around and asked the prices be-

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cause I wanted him Downtown with me," Heard said. But without the subsidy, she couldn't hope to pay their fees of \$125 a week or more.

So Heard began investigating the lower-cost programs on the list and in the Pennysaver. Most were family or group day care homes.

What she found was not encouraging.

"I looked at a lot of places I didn't like," she recalled.

Some of them were shabby or disorganized. Some didn't seem to have enough caregivers for the number of children. Others lacked activities and materials. And some of the adults didn't strike her as warm or knowledgeable about children.

"I read some books and articles about day care, so I knew some of what to look for," Heard said. "But in the end it all comes down to what you can afford."

A home at Papa Bear

Eventually she found Papa Bear Child Care, a family group home of 13 years' standing in Wilkinsburg. The operator is Horace Pridgen, a former grade school teacher.

"I liked that Horace was a teacher," Heard said. "I liked that he was a male, since London's father is not involved in his life at all."

"I saw the books he had there, and how he played with the kids. He said I should feel free to come over or call any time. I got a good feeling about the place."

Papa Bear is located in an older, three-story frame house with a wooden porch that sags in front. The children are on the first floor, which has two child care rooms, a bathroom, office and kitchen. The linoleum floor has seen better days, but it's clean; the walls are brightly painted and decorated with letters and numbers.

Licensing inspection reports at the state Department of Public Welfare show that Papa Bear has had occasional violations, some of them common in day care facilities — peeling paint outside, incomplete paperwork, too many children for the number of caregivers on one day last year. But state officials say it is not a high-risk facility.

"Our place may not be the shiniest or newest," Pridgen said. "But I'm proud of the fact that almost all the children who come here are referrals from people who sent their own children here."

On a recent morning, London slept soundly in his playpen while a few toddlers played hide and seek with Shawn Bey, a Papa Bear caregiver for seven years.

In the other room, a Barney video played on the TV, but the four preschoolers weren't



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette photos

Rena Heard gives her son, London, a quick sponge bath in his bedroom before taking him to day care for the day.

watching. They were sitting at a small table with caregiver Shelley Lee, Pridgen's fiancée, doing an art project and having a conversation about bunnies.

Heard said she got a good feeling from Lee and Bey when she visited. They seemed engaged and tuned in to the children. And since she wasn't getting a subsidy, Pridgen reduced his \$94-a-week fee to make the care affordable.

Heard visited Papa Bear several times before deciding it would be a good place for London. He entered care there when he was 6 months old.

The first days were difficult for his mom.

"I called every couple hours to check on him," she recalled. "I felt bad that I was calling so much, but Horace always said to keep on calling if it made me feel better."

A comfortable feeling

London has been at Papa Bear for eight months now, and Heard believes it has been good for him.

"They notice all the same things about him that I do at home," she said, "like what words he's saying, and that he likes the wheels on toy trucks. So I know they're paying attention to him."

"In the mornings when Horace comes out to the car, London is so happy to see him he tries to jump out of his car seat."

Recently, Heard finally discovered one

option that is open to her, although she didn't realize it.

It's the dependent care account.

Some companies, including Blue Cross, offer such accounts, in which employees can choose to have part of their pretax pay withheld from each check.

The account is most beneficial to people who earn the most and pay the most in taxes. But for lower wage earners, even a 5-to-7-percent savings can be worthwhile — especially since they typically pay a much higher percentage of their income for child care than middle-class workers.

Heard said she remembered hearing something about the dependent care account, but wasn't sure what it was.

"Unfortunately, that is not unique to our company or any other," said Rosemary Bufalini, director of Human Services at Blue Cross of Western Pennsylvania.

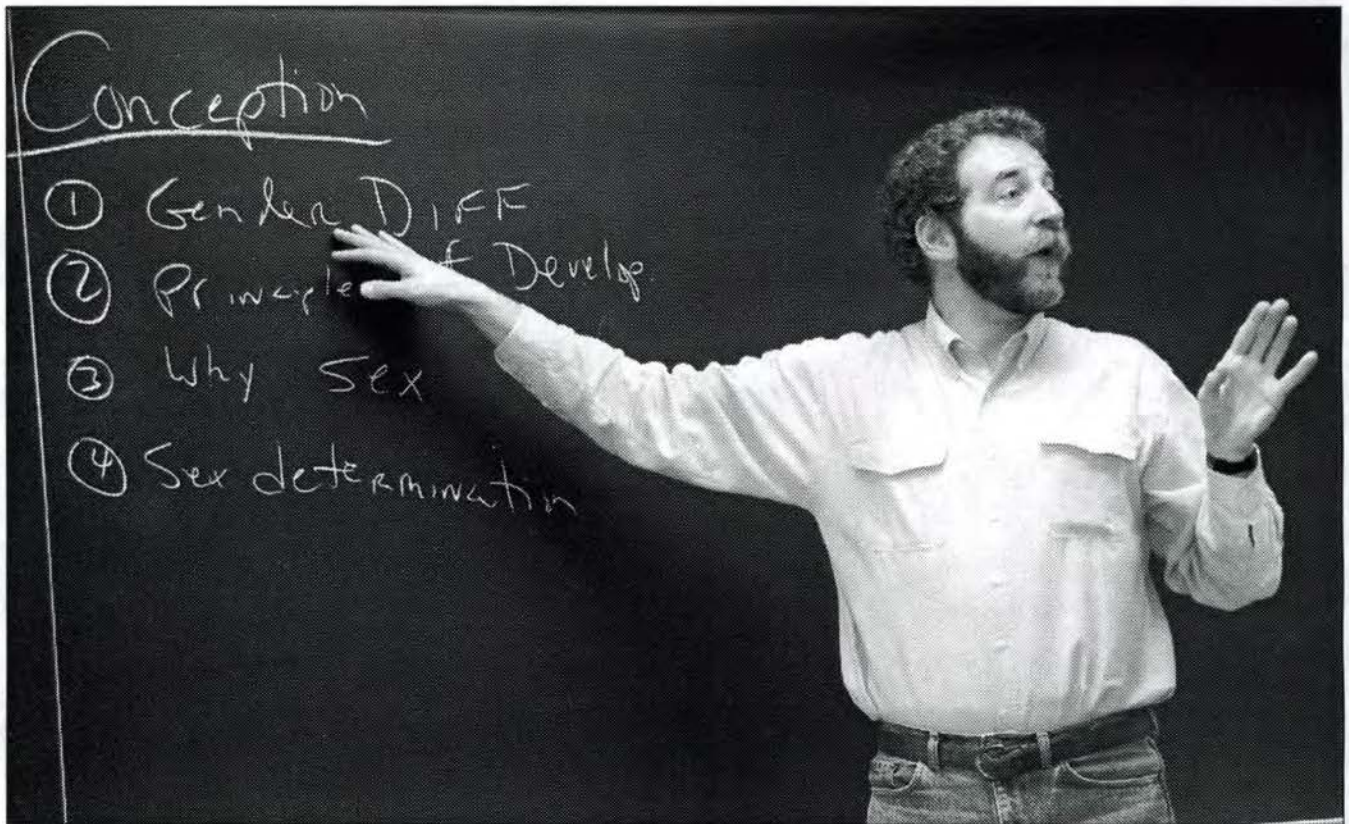
"We send all kinds of literature to our employees, we have a benefits fair once a year, and every few months we post signs. But people don't always get the message."

Now that Heard is aware of the account, she's checking into it. And she's still hoping the child care subsidy will come through eventually.

If it does, would she move London to one of those shiny Downtown centers?

"You know," she said, "I kind of like him where he is."

Penn State University professor Jay Belsky's research concluded that extensive time in day care might inhibit infants from bonding properly with their mothers. Belsky says he never meant to imply that good day care was harmful, but many used his findings to attack day care in general.



Martha Rial/Post-Gazette

At the center of a philosophical firestorm

Penn State professor's study was used as a conservative club against day care

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

You probably don't remember Jay Belsky. But you may remember the first time you heard about his research, which said day care might be bad for very young children.

It was 10 years ago, and the media jumped all over the story, and all over Belsky, a Penn State child care researcher. Belsky had concluded that a small but

statistically significant number of infants who are in day care for more than 20 hours a week might have difficulty bonding with their mothers. And that insecure attachment might lead to psychological and behavioral problems later in life, he decided.

Coming after a decade of good-news research on day care in the 1970s and early 80s, mostly in high-quality, university-sponsored centers, Belsky's findings raised a firestorm of contention.

Aha, conservatives crowed. Working mothers are bad for children. Not so, femi-

nists countered. Belsky had misinterpreted the research, and besides, he was biased: his wife had stayed at home to care for their two children.

To this day, Belsky feels his work was attacked for the wrong reason.

"I was an early victim of politically correct thinking before the term was coined," Belsky said. "I broke the 11th commandment of developmental psychology, which is, 'Thou shalt not speak ill of day care.'"

Belsky said he never meant to imply that good day care is harmful.

"If you have great day care, with sensitive, stable caregivers, there's no evidence that there's any difference" between children reared at home and in day care, he says today.

The Strange Situation

Belsky's original findings were based largely on a common child development research tool — The Strange Situation.

In the test, a child is observed in a laboratory with his mother, who then leaves briefly. Depending on the child's response when she leaves and when she returns, some researchers say they can measure the quality of attachment between mother and child.

If an infant cries when the mother leaves but is easily consoled when she comes back, they say, then he probably has a "secure" attachment, and that means he will probably be pretty well-adjusted later on.

But if the child is indifferent when she leaves and returns, or if the child is extremely upset when she goes and can't be consoled when she gets back, it may be a sign that the links to mom are tenuous.

Belsky found that among the 464 infants who were studied, about a quarter of those raised at home had insecure attachments to their mothers, while more than 40 percent of the day-care babies did.

But now, new findings using the very same test have knocked a major hole in Belsky's thesis.

In a study of nearly 1,200 infants in nine states, researchers concluded from a new set of Strange Situation experiments that there is no significant difference in maternal attachment between children raised at home and those who were in day care more than 10 hours per week.

In fact, between 60 and 70 percent of both the at-home and day care groups were rated as having secure attachments when they were observed at 15 months of age.

And Belsky himself is one of the experts who was part of the nationwide research group.

Does this mean his earlier conclusions about the risks of infant day care were wrong?

He's not willing to say that yet.

Belsky noted that 10 years ago, there was also research showing children who had been in extensive day care at young ages were more aggressive and disobe-

dient when they became preschoolers.

And the new study, sponsored by the the National Institute of Child Health and Development, has not tracked children long enough to show whether the day care group will exhibit the same behavior problems, he said.

'Dual risk' children

He also noted that the latest findings do show that if a child's mother has poor parenting skills, her child can be at even greater risk if he is in day care.

"What we found is that most children are not affected by day care, and it doesn't matter if it's high- or low-quality care, or whether there's lots of care.

"However, for those children who are getting low-quality care from mom, which itself is related to insecurity, they become more likely to be insecure when they get more than 10 hours of day care per week, or get low-quality day care."

What does that mean for the children's future? Belsky crafts a meteorological analogy.

"Imagine you step out of the house without a weather report. It's drizzling. Will it continue? Will it become a down-pour or turn into a sunny day?"

The findings show some children are standing under that "drizzle," and no one will know for several years what their behavioral weather map will look like.

Deborah Lowe Vandell, a child care expert from the University of Wisconsin, said she agrees with Belsky that it's too early to say whether children in day care will suffer when they get older, in areas like language skills or getting along with others.

But she said the new study does seem to show that women shouldn't worry that leaving their babies in day care will automatically damage the bond between them — as long as the mothers are sensitive to their children's needs when they're with them.

And, she noted, it also appears that good day care can help make children more secure if they have insensitive mothers.

But Belsky said his concern is over day care as it exists today — not as it should be.

"If we could give every child in America stable, sensitive caregivers, I wouldn't have any concerns about who they were, whether they were mothers or people from Mars. But most day care in America is demonstrably not that."

U.S. lags on parental leave policy

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



In Europe it's called "the baby year."

In America, it isn't called anything at all.

Paid, state-subsidized parental leave for six months to a year or more is a fact of life in more than 100 countries.

In America, it's a fantasy that has periodically been resurrected, discussed and buried again.

There is nothing that remotely resembles Europe's generous leaves for new parents here. The closest we get under the law is either paid maternity leave, averaging about six weeks, that is part of the disability subsidy that all insured workers receive under a 1978 law; and 12 weeks of unpaid leave for care of a dependent under the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act.

Even though it didn't become law until after several presidential vetoes, the family leave act "is awful," said Edward Zigler, Yale University psychologist. Ten years ago, Zigler and renowned pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton fruitlessly pushed Congress to pass a bill requiring a six-month paid leave for new parents.

"It's especially awful when you stop to consider that Ghana has a paid leave; Haiti has a paid leave, for God's sake. When are we going to join the rest of the world?" Zigler asked.

Most experts say that the best thing for children would be for parents to remain home with them for the first four to six months; others say a year would be better.

But the biggest groups that lobby for improved child and family policies — the Child Care Action Campaign, the Children's Defense Fund, and others — focus primarily on day care, although they have also come out for paid leave.

Why the greater stress on day care?

"It's reality," said Child Care Action's Barbara Reisman. She said her group has always promoted paid leave as an option for parents, but adds that "staying home is not

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an option for most people."

Besides the fear that focusing on paid leave would weaken support for day care, some worry that an across-the-board policy encouraging women to stay home when their children are young would dilute hard-won gains in the workplace.

"It's a complicated issue. Parental leave works really well for some women and babies and not for others," said Carolee Howes, a noted child development researcher at the University of California at Los Angeles. "For some women, taking a 12-month leave will absolutely undo their careers," she said.

Still, at least some child care advocates regret the overwhelming focus that the early women's movement put on job parity.

Feminists "focused more on gains for women apart from children for so long, we ended up doing damage to both," said Barbara Willer, a spokeswoman for the National Association for the Education of Young Children. "We ended up with 40-hour work weeks for women as well as men, but if we had focused on living wages and paid leaves for families early on, who knows what might have happened?"

The first paid maternity leave for working women — believe it or not — came from none other than the spike-helmeted Prussian warrior-statesman, Otto von Bismarck, who in the 1800s enacted a sweeping social welfare plan that included maternity leave.

At the end of World War I, most European governments followed suit. As more and more women entered the work force, Hungary came up with the first "parental" leave — an extended period of time that allowed women to remain home to care for children.

Could it happen here?

There have been several proposals calling for employer-employee contributions to an insurance or unemployment fund to finance parental leaves, to be administered by state or federal agencies.

But it doesn't look like Congress will consider any proposals in the near future, especially given the protracted fight over the family leave bill in the mid-1980s, and last year's legislative efforts to get welfare mothers back to work when their children are as young as 8 weeks old.

"I'm all for paid leave — if companies are willing to pay for it," said Ron Haskins, a Republican staffer for the House Ways and Means Committee who is handling the child care component of the Republicans' latest welfare reform bill.

Cost is a big concern. If every eligible mother were paid the minimum wage for one year after her child was born, that would amount to roughly \$27 billion, political scientist William Gormley has estimated.

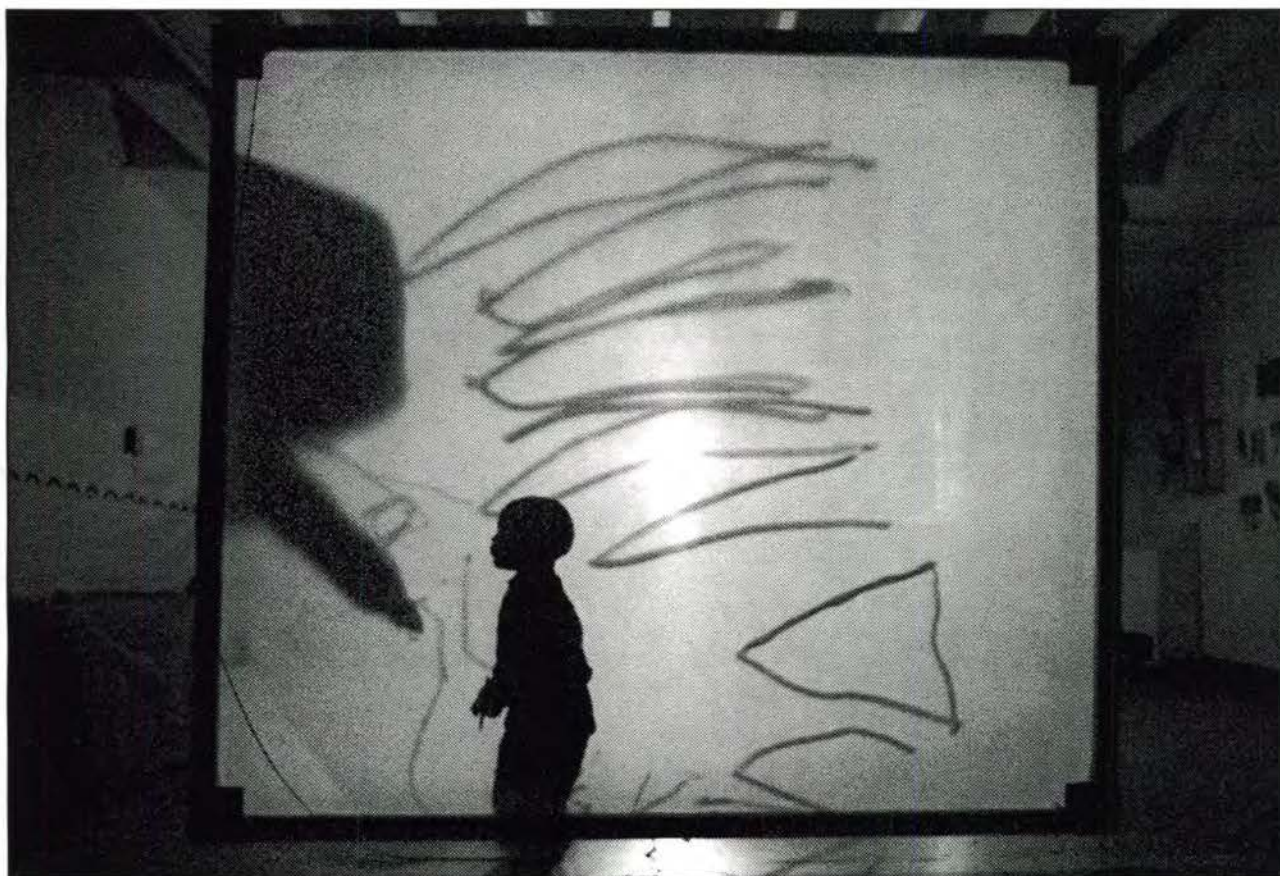
But the Family and Medical Leave Commission said that a 12-week paid leave would cost only \$7 a month per employee, if it were deducted from workers' pay and invested in a disability fund.

Any such plan is unlikely for now.

"Right now you're dealing with a political environment that makes it seem impossible," said Sheila Kamerman, a child care expert at Columbia University.

But in the end, not adopting parental leave is penny-wise and pound-foolish, she believes.

"I think providing a paid leave for six months would be far less expensive ultimately than having to deal with providing decent quality infant care, and it's much better for the kids and for the mother."



At the Model Early Learning Center in Washington, D.C., affiliated with the renowned Reggio Emilia schools in Italy, teachers let children draw images on an overhead projector that has a giant screen. Other students can then stand in front of the screen and become part of the picture as they discuss the images with their teacher.

Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Quest for quality care

It means different things to different people, which makes it hard to pinpoint

By Sally Kalson
and Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writers

After a child in day care died last August from being left in a van on a hot day, a lot of the center's parents got mad.

Not at the center, though. They were angry at the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare for closing the center down.

On the day of 4-year-old Alexandra LeVasseur's death, Creation Station, in Peters Township, was operating without the minimum number of caregivers required by

the state — and it wasn't the first time. Owners Nancy and David Scheewe had been warned repeatedly by state inspectors to fix their staffing levels and other violations.

Even today, some parents remain angry over the closure.

"My children got something there that they never received at any other day care, and that is love," said Cathleen Comeaux-Bach, whose two children attended the center. "When a child dies in a Pittsburgh swimming pool, they don't close the swimming pool. Why should Creation Station be any different?"

That kind of attitude has stunned a lot of folks in the child care field — no one more

than Louise Sutton, regional director of the welfare department's day care division.

If repeated violations culminating in the death of a child are not enough reason for parents to want to pull their children out of a center, what would be?

"Being warm and welcoming to children is certainly important, but first you have to keep them safe from harm," Sutton said. "If children are not safe, then all the good feelings in the world don't matter."

Jerlean Daniels, child development professor at the University of Pittsburgh, shook her head over the incident.

"If ever there were proof that we need to educate parents better about what quality

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child care is, this is it," she said.

No common ground

Creation Station is an extreme example of a common phenomenon in child care: Parents, providers, regulators and child development experts don't always agree on what a "good" program is.

Parents often base their judgments on gut feelings. As long as a day care program doesn't set off alarms, they may conclude it's good enough for what they can afford.

State day care inspectors look for quality in how well a center complies with rules and regulations. Child development experts look for "indicators" of quality — like appropriate toys and the training of the employees — that they've identified through their research.

And providers — the best of whom care about all these things — still have to pay attention to the bottom line.

Almost all the day care directors interviewed for this series agreed with the national studies that found mediocrity is the norm in their profession. But they also described their own programs as high quality.

At Carnegie Mellon University's center, Director Marsha Poster cites its accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, or NAEYC, and insists that no center without such accreditation can rightfully call itself high-quality.

At Color Me Happy in the North Hills, Director Wendy Stanton has no plans to seek NAEYC accreditation. Few of her staffers have college degrees in child development or much training in the field, but they fiercely defend their nurturing and teaching abilities against anyone's. The center has an almost spotless state inspection record, too.

KinderCare CEO Sandra Scarr said her national chain, which has 16 sites in the Pittsburgh region, provides quality by striving for a certain amount of uniformity, so that parents can be reasonably assured of getting what they're paying for.

Horace Pridgen, who operates a registered family group home in Wilkinsburg and has had his share of violations during state inspections, contends he must be giving quality care or neighborhood parents wouldn't keep bringing their children to him.

And then there's the family day care provider in Oakdale who claims to offer the kind of home environment that day care centers can't — even though she works under the table and has no plans to register with the state.

Somebody must be right about what makes for quality. But who?

Let's begin with what quality is not.

It is not licensing. Licensing is important;

it's also required by law. But it cannot ensure quality child care any more than licensing motor vehicle operators can ensure good driving.

Quality is also not a million-dollar building with the latest computers in every room. Nor is it a place that will keep your child an hour over schedule without charging. And it's not the one closest to your house.

All these things could well be part of a high-quality program. But they are not the defining factors.

The important factors have been identified by a host of early childhood groups. But if you had to explain the core component while standing on one foot, it would be this:

Quality day care achieves a warm, positive relationship between the caregiver and the child.

All the other standards — compliance with health and safety rules; staff-to-child ratios; curriculum; activities appropriate to the child's age; staff salaries, qualifications and training; parental involvement — exist for the purpose of fostering that critical relationship.

In a good day care center, that relationship is composed of a series of moments that add up to a day well-spent. Experienced observers can even describe the moments.

At a good center, they say, adults smile at children, hold and touch them, and speak to them individually at their eye level; adults position themselves to be aware of what's going on in the rest of the room, even when working with a small group; adults ask open-ended questions that require more than a yes-or-no answer; adults use positive guidance to head off problems.

If these good relationships exist, experts believe, the rest of the ingredients that constitute high-quality day care are probably present, too.

The reverse is also true: If a center has safety hazards or poorly trained staff or high turnover, the positive relationships are harder to build.

Parents' priorities

All the emphasis on quality among the professionals might give the impression that it's the first thing parents look for when they go hunting for day care arrangements.

Not so, said Jan Mattern, who operates a string of day care centers and family day care homes in the North Hills.

"In my experience, parents look for three things. First, convenience. Second, cost. And third, quality."

Sometimes, Mattern said, parents will attempt to register their children by phone without an inspection visit.

She won't let them — and no responsible

director should, she said. But even when parents visit, they rarely ask if the center is licensed. Rarer still is a request to see her state inspection reports, which must be posted in the office.

Just how hard is it to get parents thinking about quality? Robert Kelley, a state licensing inspector, told this story about a mother who called him seeking information about three centers she was considering for her baby.

"I told her that one had a pretty clean record, one had some problems, and the third had a long list of violations they were having a hard time correcting."

"She said she was leaning toward the worst one because it was closer to her house."

Kelley asked why she wouldn't choose the program with a clean record when it was only a few more minutes' drive. She stopped, and replied, "Gee, I didn't think of that. Maybe you're right."

Once their children are enrolled in a program, studies show, parents tend to see what they want to see.

The Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes study in 1994 examined parental attitudes at 225 child care centers in four cities. Researchers found that parents consistently overrated the quality of day care their children were receiving, compared with what the researchers observed.

Not everyone is buying this reported gap in perception, however.

"There are a lot of people in the field with different ideas on what constitutes quality child care," said Judsen Culbreth, editor of Working Mother magazine. "There are a lot of purists who tend to be pretty rigid about things."

"But mothers, for the most part, really like child care," she said. "I think parents see kids who are flourishing, who are happy getting up and going to these centers in the morning, and the kid doesn't care if there's a sand table or not."

Others, however, were not surprised that parents might view their children's day care arrangements with blinders on.

"What parent could go to work in the morning if they thought the place where they left their kids was terrible?" said Joan Benso, director of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children.

In the end, most everyone agreed that the biggest push for quality has to come from parents who know what it is and are ready to demand it.

As Mark Bibro of Louise Child Care put it: "If every parent would ask questions about quality when shopping for a child care center, and be prepared to walk if they aren't answered satisfactorily, the quality of care would increase substantially overnight."

Child care chains: The tension between profit and quality

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



Frank Reabe's company is making money in child care.

Not a lot of money — the margins in his line of work are notoriously thin — but enough to keep the shareholders satisfied.

Reabe is CEO of Tender Care Learning Centers, a local network of 18 for-profit day care centers owned by private investors. He won't disclose the profit margin, but the industry average hovers somewhere around 5 percent.

While nonprofit child care operations are forever fund-raising to keep their doors open, Reabe's centers do no such thing. Parent fees, from \$136 a week for infants to \$107 for preschoolers, cover everything, he said, with modest dividends left over at the end of the year.

Tender Care is one of the 50 largest providers in the nation, according to Child Care Information Exchange magazine, published by Roger Neugebauer. Yet its capacity of 1,340 is dwarfed by the "big guys."

KinderCare Learning Centers is the by far the largest provider of civilian child care in America, with more than 1,100 centers in 38 states, including 16 in the Pittsburgh region.

Next in line is Kansas-based La Petite Academy, which has 750 centers, including one in Pittsburgh. Then comes Children's World Learning Centers of Golden, Colo., with 550 locations. Fourth is Children's Discovery Centers, based in San Rafael, Calif., with 239 centers, including eight in this region that operate under the name of Magic Years.

For-profit child care accounts for about 40 percent of all centers, according to Neugebauer. That percentage, he said, is about the same as it was 20 years ago. Meanwhile, nonprofit organizations — universities, hos-

pitals, religious and community groups — continue to run the other 60 percent.

Still, with the overall number of centers exploding in the last two decades, more children than ever are attending for-profit centers. Which leads to the question: Can day care make money and still keep quality high?

It all depends on how the profit margin is maintained, said Roger Brown, CEO of Bright Horizons Learning Centers, the country's eighth-largest provider.

"If you do it by economies of scale or by finding an outside source of support beyond parent fees, that's good," said Brown.

"But if you do it by cutting corners, hiring people at the lowest end of the pay scale and creating high turnover, that's not good."

Corporate angels

Bright Horizons maintains quality by running only employer-sponsored centers in workplaces. Its 123 operations are each connected with an institution that provides the facility, underwrites fees, or gives operating subsidies to the centers.

Thus, Brown is able to pay child care employees in many centers the almost unheard of salary of \$20,000 a year. In the markets with the heaviest corporate subsidies, the salaries are even higher, comparable to those of public school teachers. And tuition can go as high as \$220 a week for infant care — some of which underwrites poor children.

Still, he only sees a 3-to-4-percent return, but that's fine with the main shareholders, who happen to be Brown and his wife.

Outside support matters far more than a center's nonprofit or for-profit status, according to the Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes study, a national day care study done by four universities in 1994. Centers that had extra financial help were better insulated against enrollment drops, staff turnover and other common problems, researchers found. Centers that didn't were vulnerable.

But Bright Horizons is the rare exception in child care. The vast majority of centers don't have that kind of support.

And for that reason, critics maintain, the temptation to boost dividends by cutting corners is still present in for-profit care.

Some nonprofit providers see child care as a mission — a money-losing one. They contend that quality is costly. For example, it often involves paying higher salaries than the going rate or having a lower child-staff ratio than states require. For another, nonprofits are more likely to locate in lower-income neighborhoods, where the need is high but tuition can't be.

"The question is, why are you in this business?" said Mark Bibro, executive director of the nonprofit Louise Child Care. "If the primary goal is to make money and you don't make enough, then you're out of business. If your primary goal is to serve children, then you find ways to keep quality high and still make ends meet."

The big chains, he said, stay in business by operating mostly in middle- to upper-income neighborhoods where families can pay higher fees.

"Even then, their centers have to be very large, and they have to keep them full. Those companies can't afford to go into lower-income neighborhoods or take a high percentage of subsidized kids."

Some large chains are moving to blunt such criticism.

KinderCare and Children's World, for example, accept poor children on subsidies. The two KinderCare centers in Erie have 100 subsidized children between them, said Judy Alvarez, the company's area coordinator, and in some of the chain's suburban Pittsburgh centers, up to 25 percent of the children are on subsidies.

Seeking accreditation

The big companies also are pushing hard to get their centers accredited by the Na-

tional Association for the Education of Young Children.

NAEYC accreditation is considered the gold standard of quality. It sets rigorous criteria and requires an exhaustive process of self-study, plus assessment by an outside evaluator.

Bright Horizons, with its corporate support, has been able to accredit 80 percent of its established centers. More than a third of the Children's World centers are accredited, and the goal is 100 percent by the year 2000. Even KinderCare, once derided in child development circles as "Kentucky Fried day care," has mounted a big push toward accreditation, with 25 percent of its centers in the process.

NAEYC spokeswoman Barbara Willer said the growing trend toward accreditation among chains shows that profit and quality can and do coexist.

Chain executives also note that their size allows them to offer employee benefits that small operations usually can't, which helps them cut turnover.

Kimberly Moore Kneas, vice president of education for Children's World, points to her 18-member education department, whose members work with staff at every center. The company also offers employees free child care based on tenure; health, dental and life insurance; paid vacations and sick time; and a chance to move up the corporate ladder.

As a smaller chain operator, Frank Reabe doesn't have the resources to provide those kinds of benefits to employees. Still, he said "I'll stake our reputation and quality against anyone."

State inspection reports for 16 of his centers last year showed scattered minor violations, most of which were corrected immediately. Three of the centers had too few caregivers for the number of children there, and they promised inspectors it wouldn't happen again.

To keep his centers in the black, Reabe does what most independent operators have to if they rely on fees: he locates most of his centers in well-to-do suburbs; he doesn't accept children on Department of Public Welfare subsidies; he starts employees with college degrees at \$6.25 an hour — about half of what he'd like to pay them; and he sends employees home if there are too few children on any given day.

This last practice in particular is frowned upon by NAEYC, which said it contributes to staff insecurity and turnover.

But Reabe said bluntly, "It's an economic necessity."

Industry analyst Neugebauer agrees. "If the smaller guys don't do it, they can't survive. It's a sad fact."

And the smaller guys still dominate the market.

The last national child care census, conducted in 1989, showed the smaller operators running 81 percent of all for-profit centers. That was down only 4 percent from 1969.

In the end, both for-profit and nonprofit day care centers face the same challenges. Providers can keep their doors open and their quality high by fund-raising, connecting with an outside benefactor; being part of a large chain with deeper pockets, or turning away the poorest children.

Failing that, their choices are depressingly obvious: cut quality, or close up shop.

Family day care: The good, the bad and the illegal

By Sally Kalson
and Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writers



he ads in the weekly shopping tabloid seem innocent enough.

"Baby-sitting in my home," they read. "Reasonable rates."

But some of them carry an unwritten subtext: "Illegal family day care available."

Take Lee in Oakdale, whose ad in a shoppers weekly said she specialized in infants. Recently widowed, she takes care of three children once a week, which is perfectly legal. But she's looking to make it a full-time occupation with four or five children, which is not legal unless she registers with the state Department of Public Welfare.

She has no intention of registering.

"My accountant told me, 'Honey, you don't have any money. You have to do this under the table,' " she said, so that she won't have to pay taxes or make expensive physical improvements.

Lee is one of a million women who provide home-based care for 6 million to 8 million American children every year.

Family day care homes are by far the largest suppliers of child care in the nation, but only 20 percent of them are regulated. The other 80 percent are either legally exempt because they take only a few children, or they operate underground.

That means that millions of American children are spending their days in care that passes beneath the radar — unregulated, uninspected, out of sight and out of

mind.

In Pennsylvania, anyone who cares for four to six children is supposed to register annually with the Department of Public Welfare as a family day care home.

Some of them do. The state has more than 3,000 registered family day care homes on record. Nationwide, there are more than 300,000 regulated providers, according to the Family Child Care Licensing Study of 1995.

But most of the care is illegal. It can be found nearly everywhere, but it is believed to proliferate in poorer neighborhoods where wages are low and the underground economy flourishes.

These operations are rarely shut down by local officials because they don't officially exist, although sometimes a nosy neighbor or unhappy parent might spill the beans. In Pennsylvania, 85 individuals have been ordered to stop operating illegal day care homes since January 1995. But for the most part, overtaxed day care inspectors say they don't have time to go looking for them.

Illegal care is not, by definition, bad care.

But experts say illegal day care homes are a spawning ground for crowding, neglect, abuse and inappropriate practices — like plunking children in front of a TV for hours on end — that go largely undetected.

Furthermore, studies show that illegal providers are less sensitive and responsive to children than their regulated counterparts. They are also less likely to have training and planned activities for the children, and less likely to view family day care as their chosen occupation.

This last point matters more than many parents might think.

"You always have to ask yourself about motivation," said Darlene Hamilton of the YWCA Child Care Partnerships, which runs training and assistance programs for family day care providers.

"If people view child care as their profession, then they are going to seek out training and follow health and safety practices. But if they just want to make a few extra dollars, they're probably not going to bother."

But don't tell that to Lee from Oakdale.

She described herself as great with kids.

"I adore them, and they give me great peace of mind right now," she said.

"If I had the state regulate what I'm doing, that wouldn't make me any better at caring for kids than I am now. I mean, I provide a nice home. And when you look at all these children being left in vans..."

There are two primary reasons why so much family day care is illegal — money, and distrust of government regulation.

At rates of \$70 to \$110 a week per child, no one in family day care is getting rich.

The average regulated provider earns

\$15,649 annually before expenses and \$8,627 after, according to a 1994 national study.

How much illegal providers are making, no one knows. By not paying taxes or meeting state standards, they can charge less and keep more of what they earn.

But the tax burden might not be as bad as people fear, the YWCA's Hamilton said, because a lot of expenses can be deducted. Furthermore, registered providers can get government food subsidies for eligible children.

For registered family day care providers, the level of regulation in most states is relatively low. In Pennsylvania, inspectors make an initial visit that is rarely repeated unless there are complaints. After that, 10 percent are inspected per year on a random basis.

But one regulation has wreaked havoc with legal family day care in Pennsylvania — the requirement that smoke alarms be hard-wired into the electrical system instead of battery-operated. The cost of hard-wiring can be \$200 or more.

In 1993, before the Department of Labor and Industry began enforcing the smoke alarm rule, there were 6,247 legal family day

care homes in Pennsylvania. By last January, the number had dropped to 3,803.

Mary Jane Culberson of McKeesport is one provider who opted out. She had cared for six children in her home for 20 years. But last year, she dropped down to three to escape regulation, and she cited smoke alarms as her only reason.

"I was only open during the day," she said. "I didn't see where having battery-operated smoke alarms was detrimental. So I had to tell some of the mothers that I couldn't take their kids anymore."

And even though Gov. Ridge rescinded the smoke alarm rule last month, it's a safe bet that many of those providers are permanently lost to regulated care.

So how good can in-home care be?

The most conscientious providers offer excellent care, especially for infants, because fewer children allow more attention per child.

Family day care also offers flexible hours, proximity to home, and is more able to meet special needs of disabled children.

"It's a wonderful option when it's done right," Hamilton said.

Two day care homes stymied by zoning



In some communities in Pennsylvania, legal family day care is an oxymoron.

Audrey Catanzaro found that out the hard way last year.

Catanzaro registered her small family day care operation in Baldwin Borough with the state welfare department, even though she technically didn't have to. Catanzaro was caring for two unrelated children in her home, well under the four-to-six-child range that requires state registration.

But she sought out the welfare department anyway, she said, because "if it was my child, I'd want the person to be registered. Parents deserve that much peace of mind."

A day care inspector came to the house and told her what she'd have to do to meet regulations. She and her husband complied, investing about \$1,500 in improvements.

And then one day a Baldwin police officer knocked on her door and told her she was violating a borough ordinance — no businesses allowed in a residential neighborhood.

Catanzaro took her case to a council

meeting. The official response, she said, was twofold: She should have lied to the police officer about her activities; but since it was too late for that, she could always baby-sit for free.

So Catanzaro stopped doing child care. The parents of her two young charges had to scramble for other arrangements. And she had to find a night job because she couldn't afford day care for her own 3-year-old.

She now does clerical work at Hill's department store.

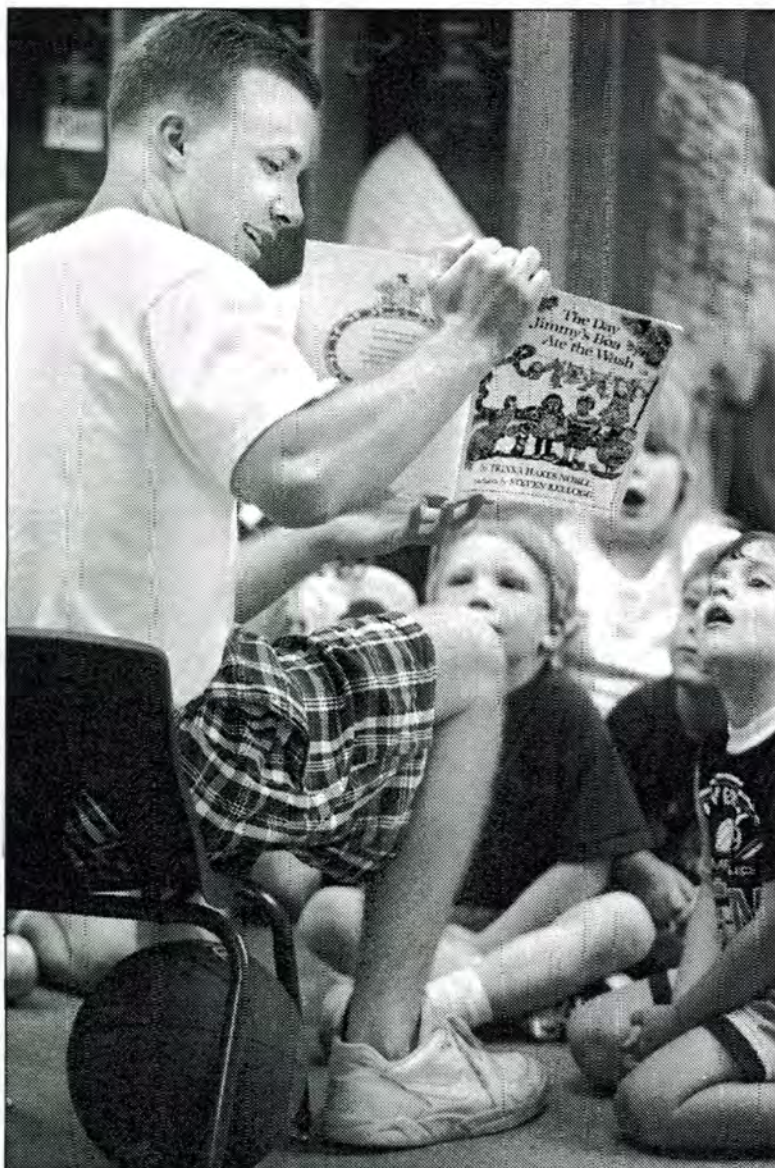
"The zoning ordinance is so antiquated," she said. "It hurts parents and kids, and it really ought to change."

That's the same thing April Mundorf told Bellevue council last month when it moved to close her family day care operation — the only one of an estimated 16 in the borough that is legal.

The council granted her a short reprieve while it considers an amendment to the ordinance. But even the new wording isn't likely to help Mundorf, and she expects to have to move.

Child care workers can't make a living

Many have to supplement income to continue to teach children



Mick Dombrowski, 23, is a rarity in his field: a male child care teacher. Here, he reads a story to kids at Riverview Children's Center in Verona. Dombrowski passed up pursuing a higher-paying job in favor of working with children.

Why did the child care worker cross the road?

To get to her second job.

So read a hand-printed sign at a rally outside the White House in November, when the National Association for the Education of Young Children held its annual conference.

Tammy Ross wasn't there, but she gets the joke — and she's not laughing.

Ross, 26, is a child care worker who doubts she can afford the profession much longer.

Her degree in elementary education cost her \$21,000 in loans. Yet after three years on the job, her assistant-teacher salary of \$11,500 a year was less than what her sister earned as a clerk at K-Mart.

At the end of each month, Ross would have about \$30 in the bank.

Recently engaged to be married, she noted that this is no way to save for a wedding — nor contribute to the family income after the honeymoon. So even though she was promoted to head teacher in April, with a raise to \$15,000 a year, she's looking for a way out of day care.

"I really don't want to leave, but I'm afraid my hand will be forced," Ross said.

"Taking care of children is the most important work there is. But we're paid as if it were the least important — and this center is better than most. At least we get some benefits."

*story by
sally kalson*

*photographs by
annie o'neill*

Her boss sympathizes.

"Child care is the most underpaid profession in America," said Barbara Keiser, executive director of Riverview Children's Center, a nonprofit facility in Verona accredited by NAEYC.

"The employees here do a wonderful job, and every one of them is worth more than I can pay them," Keiser said.

"But the money just isn't there. Parents are already paying as much as they can. Even with all our fund-raising, this is the best we can do without some kind of support from the state or federal government."

If wages in the field don't improve, Ross said, employees will be forced out. And that, she said, will be bad for Riverview's 105 children.

"Some of these kids are here 11 hours a day, five days a week. During that time we're their role models. We're their stability."

"If a staff member quits, the kids cry. They don't understand why. You can't explain to a 3-year-old that the person they loved had to leave because she couldn't pay her bills. All they know is that someone important to them

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has gone."

Living with mom

Patty McAuliffe has worked at Riverview for 11 years. After all that time, she said, "my salary isn't even comparable to a starting salary in the business world."

During her first five years at the center, she lived off the money she made busing tables three nights a week. And now, at the age of 35, she lives with her mother to save money — not exactly the way she pictured life with a bachelor's degree in special education.

"You have to love this work to stay in it, because the rewards are certainly not financial," McAuliffe said.

And that, she noted, is why people outside the field don't respect it.

"My own family thinks I'm not motivated. They say things like, 'Why don't you get a real teaching job?'"

"I know I have a real job, and it's harder than most. Anyone who doubts it is welcome to watch for an hour."

Knowing this, why would anyone want a career in child care?

"Good question," said one of Riverview's newest employees, Mick Dombrowski, one of the rare men in a field that's 97 percent female.

"I actually changed majors to go into this field," said Dombrowski, 23, who had planned to become a golf teacher, but instead got an associate's degree in early childhood education.

"I enjoy coming to work," he said. "This is a happy place where you can actually help people."

That can't be said of all centers, Dombrowski noted. He recalled one place he worked where staffers had unpredictable hours and argued in front of the children.

"It was an awful place to work; the turnover was huge. But it was even worse for the children."

Who's hurt the most?

Most child care workers echo Dombrowski. The high turnover in day care, they say, is hardest on the children.

The link between job conditions and quality of care was first documented in 1988 by the National Child Care Staffing Study.

The study, conducted in 227 centers nationwide by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force in Washington, D.C., found that the most sensitive and appropriate care was provided in centers with higher wages, better work environments, lower turnover, better educated and trained staff, and more teachers caring for fewer children.

Of these components, wages were the



"You have to love this work to stay in it, because the rewards certainly aren't financial," says Patty McAuliffe, who has taught at Riverview Children's Center for 11 years. Above, McAuliffe teaches computer skills to, from left, Anthony Manning, 3, Brandon Clites, 2, and Ben Tyke, 3.

single most important predictor of quality.

The study drew a dismal portrait of conditions in the child care field. Five years later, when researchers checked on the same centers by telephone, very little had improved.

For example:

- Despite having more formal education than the average American worker, the predominantly female child care work force earned an average hourly wage of \$5.35 in 1988. By 1993, real wages, adjusted for inflation, had actually dropped to \$5.08 per hour for the lowest-paid teaching assistants, who were the fastest-growing segment of the work force. Real wages for the highest-paid teaching staff, the smallest segment, had improved only 66 cents an hour.

- Between 1977 and 1988, staff turnover nearly tripled, from 15 percent to 41 percent. Turnover dropped between 1991 and 1992 to 26 percent, but still remained almost three times the annual turnover for all U.S. companies. By comparison, turnover was only 5.6 percent among public school teachers.

- The turnover was even higher among the lowest-paid child care workers. In 1993, those earning \$5 an hour or less were leaving at a rate of 77 percent a year.

- Only 27 percent of centers provided fully paid health insurance, and a third of those did not cover assistant teachers at all.

In Pennsylvania, the situation mirrors national trends. The Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children reports that the turnover among child care teaching staff in the state is 31-to-34 percent, and fewer than one-third receive fully paid health coverage.

Who are the workers enduring such abysmal conditions?

According to the early childhood work force center, there are 3 million child care teachers, assistants and family child care providers in the United States.

About 97 percent are female; 33 percent are minority women; 41 percent have children; 10 percent are single parents.

In order to get by on their low wages, they hold second jobs, live with their parents, depend on another person's income or forgo health insurance and medical care.

Natalie Kaplan, director of the highly regarded Carriage House Children's Center in Squirrel Hill, summed it up this way:

"This center is 22 years old. When we opened in 1974, our starting salary for a master's degree was \$2.75 an hour. Now it's

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Tammy Ross, 26, a child care worker at Riverview Children's Center in Verona, helps 4-year-old Justin LaFace through an anxious moment. Ross says she doesn't think she can afford to stay in her profession much longer because of the low wages.

\$6.50. It's the best we can do, and it's still awful."

Looking for dollars

Most child care advocates look at this picture and conclude two things.

One, day care workers are not getting paid what they're worth, based on their level of education and the value of their work to society.

And two, some kind of funding mechanism, from the public or private sector or both, is imperative if day care is to improve.

These advocates compare conditions in the United States with those in progressive European nations, such as Sweden, France and Denmark. In those countries, up to 80 percent of the cost of child care is covered by tax payments. This means good care is widely available; wages are comparable to those of grade-school teachers; and the

turnover rate is a fraction of what it is here.

But not everyone in American child care jumps at the idea of a government subsidy, beyond what already exists for poor families. Even day care entrepreneurs such as Joy Troechel, who might benefit from such an arrangement — in the form of vouchers, for instance — view it with skepticism.

"We're not Europe and we never will be," said Troechel, who owns and operates two Brass Ring Learning Centers in West Mifflin and Jefferson.

Troechel would love to pay her 30 employees more. She'd love to reinstate the health care benefits that she had to drop when the cost became untenable. But, she said, "too many Americans would look at subsidies as Big Brother."

"I'd be concerned myself. It would be like making government my partner in the business, and then I'd be wondering what else

they'd want from me. I couldn't stand one more regulation."

Others say such fears are unfounded.

Steve Woods, who works with Louise Child Care to help day care centers in Allegheny County improve, points to the state and federal block grant money already being funneled through the YWCA to poorer families for child care.

"It hasn't affected regulations at all," Woods said. "All you'd have to do is open up the spigot wider, and the same amount of piping would carry more money into the system."

If the answer isn't bigger government subsidies, the money for higher salaries needs to come from someplace.

Otherwise, said the Riverview center's Ross, "no good people will come into the field, and the good ones who are in it now will leave."

How to spot quality care



If you're a parent shopping for day care, there are some road maps to help you find your way.

First, you can learn a lot from direct observations when you visit a center.

Linda Erlich, director of Shady Lane School in Point Breeze, had her staff draw up a list of items that describe high-quality interactions between caregivers and children, events that "should be happening every couple of minutes."

Parents should look for these clues:

■ **ADULTS** should be positioned around the room at all times, not clustered together or observing from afar. There shouldn't be a lot of adult-to-adult conversation.

■ **ADULTS** should be down low, on the floor, or on low chairs, and should bend to speak with the children. Teacher and child should be learning and exploring together.

■ **CONVERSATIONS** should be "content rich" and questions framed in a way that encourages problem solving. For example, if children are working with art materials, the teacher might ask about texture, color and how the children would like to use the paper or clay.

■ **STATEMENTS** should be positive and adults should offer alternatives to children. For example, if a child is throwing blocks, the teacher might say, "We don't throw blocks here because it will hurt other children, but let's find another way to use the blocks."

■ **CORRECTIONS** should be nonjudgmental. The child isn't bad, but what he did made someone feel bad.

■ **ADULTS** should be flexible. If a group project is going really well, teachers should be able to extend it a little longer.

■ **ADULTS** should "model" appropriate language and behavior at all times, including when they speak to each other.

Another guidepost list comes from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. It says good centers:

■ **RESPOND** quickly to a distressed child.

■ **TAKE** children outside for fresh air at least once a day, weather permitting.

■ **BALANCE** types of activities, from quiet to active, and "large muscle" (climbing, swinging) to "small muscle" (manipulating blocks).

■ **FOR BABIES** (birth to 1): Offer places to crawl and sturdy furniture for them to pull themselves up on; have clean, soft toys; teething; pop-beads too big to choke on; containers; balls; and action-reaction toys.

■ **FOR TODDLERS** (1-3): Have stacking blocks and picture books, music and puzzles, a toy telephone, dolls, crayons and paper, sand and water toys.

■ **FOR PRESCHOOLERS** (3-5): Have bigger play equipment, building blocks, finger paints, costumes, mirrors and dramatic play materials.

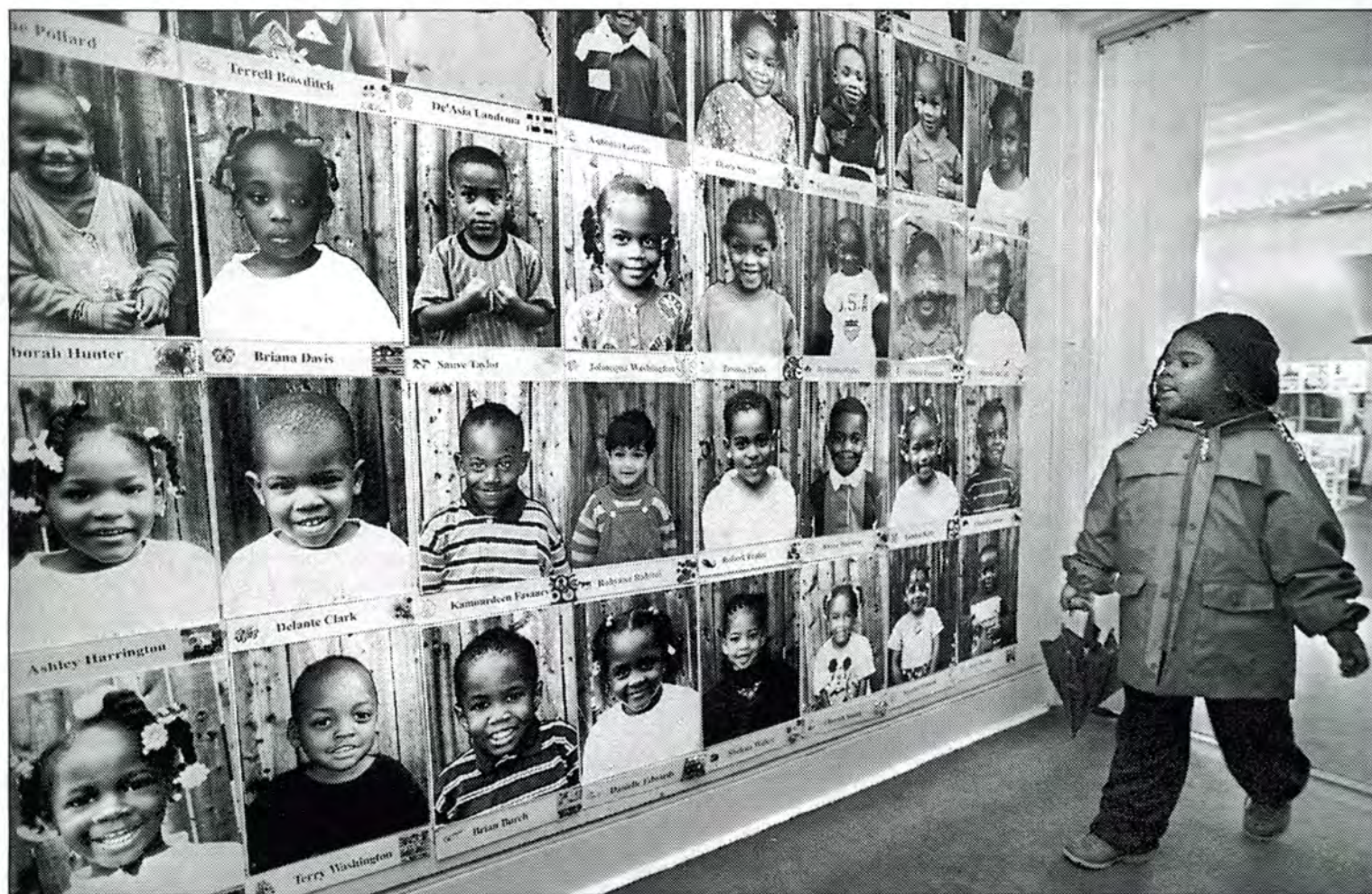
Finally, anyone can get a copy of the Department of Public Welfare's code book for day care centers and family day care homes (in this region, people can call 565-5183 for more information). And anyone has the right to see the licensing inspection reports at a day care center.

The department also has free pamphlets for parents to use when shopping for child care.

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The Model Early Learning Center in Washington, D.C., is the only official American affiliate of Italy's Reggio Emilia schools. Here, Briana Davis walks past portraits of her fellow students in the entrance of the American school.

The world's best child care?

The Reggio Emilia schools in Italy help children find answers to their own questions

The children in the northern Italian city of Reggio Emilia are no more brilliant or talented than the children anywhere else in the world. It only seems that way based on the work they produce.

Wherever you look in the town's 32 municipal children's centers, you see why Reggio Emilia has become the hottest name in early childhood innovation since Maria Montessori.

Wire mobiles of surprising delicacy and complexity are suspended from the ceilings. Paintings of exuberant color and design seem to leap off the walls. Multimedia models depict fanciful theories of how a fax is transmitted overseas, or how a volcano erupts.

The self-portraits in clay could be the work of young Picassos. Ri-

story by sally kalson



photographs by robin rombach

otous, room-filling contraptions, pieced together with Rube Goldberg ingenuity, demonstrate the properties of wind and water.

And everything was conceived, designed and executed by children 6 and under, with the gentle guidance of teachers, art educators and parents.

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Soap dispensers at the sink of the Model Early Learning Center are hooked up to a complicated maze of tubes constructed by the children. Such attention to detail makes tasks as simple as washing your hands a learning experience.

Even more notable than the creations is what they represent: a translation of ideas into hypotheses into art. Along the way, the "hundred languages" in a child's lexicon — words, movement, drawing, music — are exercised like muscles.

The goal is not only to create knock-out sculpture or collage, although that often happens. The goal is to deepen children's understanding of their world by giving them a wealth of images and experiences, and in the process encourage creative exploration, the powers of reason and collaboration.

The system is not perfect. For example, 300 children were turned away last year for lack of space. And there are questions about how well its practices can be adapted outside this largely homogeneous community in Italy's wealthiest region.

Still, these preschools and infant-toddler centers, and the structure that supports them, are considered by many to constitute the best program for young children in existence.

Newsweek magazine in 1991 went so far as to call the greenhouse-like Diana School in the city center "the best preschool in the world." Reggio Emilia sessions at American child care conferences are standing-room only. Reggio Emilia newsletters have sprung

up around the globe.

Requests to visit the schools have grown so numerous that a separate company called Reggio Children was formed two years ago to conduct week-long study tours for international delegations. More than 10,000 visitors have come through in the past decade, with more lining up all the time.

Best of everything

About 45 delegations have originated in the United States, and no wonder. Reggio Emilia has almost everything American early-childhood educators say they lack: family-friendly laws; dependable public funding; first-rate buildings and materials; skilled, motivated staff; job satisfaction and longevity; and, most critical of all, an image of children that demands the best.

Equally noteworthy is the absence of things that drive American day care providers to distraction, such as nitpicking regulation (no one here is measuring cribs to see if they're two feet apart), or societal ambivalence over women working outside the home (80 percent in Reggio Emilia do so).

The program does provide day care, but

only in the sense that Juilliard provides credits. One look around indicates how much more is going on.

"This place shatters all your assumptions about what children are capable of," said a visiting preschool teacher from Australia as she examined a shelf of ceramic tiles made by 4-year-olds.

As she spoke, a dozen or so of her fellow educators wandered around taking notes in the Pablo Neruda School, named for the Chilean poet. Some conferred in hushed, reverential tones. Others bore a stunned expression, as if they'd been kicked in the head by some magical creature — a minotaur perhaps, or a unicorn — whose existence they'd secretly believed in all their lives but could never prove until now.

Magic, though, has very little to do with the Reggio Emilia schools. What happens here is the outgrowth of 30 years of hard work and evolution that continue to this day.

Malaguzzi's vision

The story begins in 1945. A young teacher named Loris Malaguzzi hears that the women's union of Villa Cella, just outside Reggio Emilia, is building a school for young children. He bicycles over for a closer look

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Wendy Baldwin, a teacher at the Model Early Learning Center, gets a goodbye hug from student Jermaine Hailes, 5. The philosophies of the Reggio program were brought to the center by Amelia Gambetti, below, who taught in Reggio Emilia for 27 years.



and begins an association that will last a lifetime.

The school opens, as do others in the area, all of them built and run by parents who have little formal education.

For almost 20 years they struggle along — until 1963, when the municipality agrees to get involved.

In the intervening years, Malaguzzi has completely rejected the state-run school system, with its “obsequious attention towards authority and its self-serving cleverness, pushing prepackaged knowledge.”

He begins to collaborate with teachers and parents to devise a new theory of education, one in which children are protagonists rather than receptacles.

Malaguzzi died two years ago, in his 80s. But his theories and strategies continue to be practiced and revised in Reggio Emilia.

The best way to describe the schools’ approach is by example. Here’s one recent case, presented in a Reggio Emilia slide show:

The children discuss a rainbow they saw over the weekend. The teacher asks if anyone would like to try creating a rainbow in the classroom.

Three boys rise to the challenge. The teacher gives them a large glass bowl, two pitchers of water, a flashlight and a mirror, and invites them to proceed. The rest of the class moves on to other things.

For 20 minutes the boys experiment, pouring the water into the bowl, shining the flashlight onto the mirror or the water. When no rainbow appears, they darken the room and hang up a sheet as if it were a movie screen. Still no results.

They grow frustrated, but the teacher encourages them. Finally, a reflection flickers and disappears. They believe they are on the right track. Repositioning follows, and again, until — voila! — the rainbow materializes.

They take turns wielding the props, throwing the rainbow around the room. Then they wonder if they can create a giant rainbow outside.

The teacher provides a wading pool; the boys fill it with a hose. They find a large mirror in a frame and haul it into the yard. Soon they are projecting little rainbows onto each others’ faces, and big ones into the top branches of trees.

“You don’t need darkness!” one exclaims.

“You can make them big or small!” yells another.

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The trio is so excited, they decide to put on a rainbow show for the class. Their friends assemble and a production ensues, complete with costumes, carnival-barker style narration, and the rapid production of rainbows on members of the audience. The children scream with delight and applaud madly.

The boys diagram the story of their experiment, and the teacher writes in their explanations. They present their findings to other classes.

A few months later comes a postscript. One boy returns from summer vacation with a photo of himself perched on a fence. Behind him is a field of crops being sprayed by water guns on a sunny day. And dancing in the spray is — a rainbow.

"We made a mistake!" he tells his friends. "You don't need the mirror!"

The image of the child

"We do not see children as empty vessels to be filled by teachers who have all the answers," said Carlina Rinaldi, director of Reggio Children.

"We see children as rich, powerful and competent, with ideas and creativity that deserve the respect of adults."

It is not the teachers' job, she explains, to give facts. Indeed, you will never hear one telling a child that her ideas about earthquakes or elephants are incorrect. Instead, teachers help children find the questions that will lead to discovery.

How do they do this?

The Reggio Emilia approach includes four key factors.

Observation: Teachers observe the children to learn their interests, then offer ways to develop those interests into theories that can be explored and extended.

Representation: Working with the art educator, or *atelierista*, the children make art projects of their theories in the studio.

Documentation: The whole process is documented. Teachers listen, watch, transcribe and tape record children's conversations, take videotapes and photos. Often they combine quotes and photos into huge posters that cover the walls. The documentation gives importance to the children's efforts and shows parents what their children have been doing.

Revisitation: Children revisit their experiences, often creating new artwork that reflects what they have learned.

Time is a key component. Projects unfold at a leisurely pace over weeks or even months, depending on the children's interest.

And not every idea pans out. Some come

to nothing, and many things are never documented. The key for the teachers is knowing which threads to pull and which to let go.

Where are the teachers who can do all this? Not in any university. Teachers come to Reggio Emilia right out of high school, by way of a civil service test. They learn the philosophy and techniques by immersion, teamed up with veterans. They always work in pairs, one pair to a class of 26, and stay with the children for three years at a time.

Such methods might work with a 4- to 6-year-old whose language and reason are already in gear. But how can a teacher "listen" to a baby?

Rinaldi drops a tray of slides into the projector. They feature Lucia, 8 months old, in a famous series of photos from the "Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit that has been traveling the world since 1981, including a seven-week run that just ended at the University of Pittsburgh Art Gallery.

Lucia sits at a table, looking at a catalog of watches. She points to one photo and gazes up with inquiring eyes at the teacher seated beside her.

The teacher shows her own wrist watch to Lucia, and holds it up to the child's ear. Lucia listens intently to the ticking.

Then Lucia looks again at the catalog, points to a watch, and lays her head against the photo to listen for the ticking.

"This child," said Rinaldi, "is already making theories and testing them. At 8 months, she is constructing her own reality."

The price tag

All this construction has a cost.

Eight to 10 percent of the town's budget is spent on the early childhood program. In 1993, that came to about \$15 million for 5,790 children — 42 percent of the town's 3- to 6-year-olds, and 31 percent of the infants.

Children are admitted according to need. Those from single-parent or working-couple homes get preference; children with disabilities are guaranteed a place.

Parents pay tuition on a sliding scale, but even middle-class children are heavily subsidized.

In 1993, the cost per infant was about \$800 a month, but the average fee was \$190. The cost for each 3- to 6-year-old was \$660, but the average fee was \$114.

Contrast that with the U.S., where parents pay 90 percent of the cost of child care. Only the poorest American families get any kind of subsidy, and many high-quality centers must constantly fund-raise to bridge the gap between costs and fees.

So if the Reggio Emilia approach is so

great, why hasn't it spread like wildfire?

For starters, many people fear the system is a hothouse flower that could never survive outside the rarefied air of Reggio Emilia, with its wealth (due to small and medium-size industries), homogeneous population (140,000), political tradition (progressive Euro-Communist), and state taxes that are among the highest in Europe (45 percent).

Then there's the mystique of Italian culture, with its multigenerational families, slow pace and three-hour breaks in midday, allowing parents more time for nurturing their children.

Finally, there is only one place where a teacher can be trained in these methods, and that's inside the school system. Once there, teachers learn to teach children, not other teachers. So there is no source of qualified staff to fan out over the globe.

Why, then, do foreign educators descend in droves if the approach can't work elsewhere?

An American outpost

The answer is that it can. It is working, in fact, at this very moment, in a place as different from Reggio Emilia as water from wine: an inner-city neighborhood in Washington, D.C.

The Model Early Learning Center, located on the fifth floor of the Capital Children's Museum on Third Street NE, is the only other certified Reggio Emilia school in the world.

Other American programs use some of the techniques. In Pittsburgh, they include Shady Lane School in Point Breeze and the Carnegie Mellon University Child Care Center in Oakland. But only the Washington school has a formalized connection.

It happened because of Amelia Gambetti, the center's consultant-teacher, who taught in Reggio Emilia for 27 years. She came on board in 1993 at the invitation of the school's director, Ann Lewin, who had already gutted and redesigned the space for the school.

Together with the teachers, they created an American preschool that uses Reggio Emilia principles but makes sense in its own cultural environment.

The transformation didn't happen overnight, but slowly and sometimes painfully. Teacher Sonya Shoptaugh said it took time to learn the philosophy and techniques, to calm down the more frenetic American children and build the trust of parents. Yet Gambetti always believed it could be done.

"I knew there were many differences between this place and Reggio Emilia," Gambetti said in her rapid-fire English.

"So instead of looking at the differences, I

looked at the elements in common. One, children. Two, parents. Three, teachers. And I asked, can we have a new image of children and parents? Can we give them credit for what they know? Can we change the style of working in the teachers?"

Today, the center has 36 children, ages 3 to 5. Overwhelmingly African-American, they live in the neighborhood and attend without charge. They are admitted based on family income, which must be under \$12,000 a year. And although many come from broken families and crime-ridden streets, they are thriving in school as surely as their counterparts across the sea.

"My son had a very bad stutter when he started here," said Deborah Matthews of Terrell, 5. "He doesn't do that anymore. They take time to listen to him. He knows his alphabet, his numbers ... and he sings around the house! I'm sorry he's got to go to regular school now. I wish he could stay here."

But all the Model Early Learning Center's success with children has not protected it from the very American problem of funding trouble.

For the first three years, half its budget came from the D.C. public schools; the other half from foundations. But the district went into bankruptcy last year and had to withdraw its support. The program stayed open in 1995-96 by finding support from other private sources, but nothing has been secured yet for next year.

Gambetti does not know what the future holds. But she does know this much.

"Yes, you can export-import this philosophy. But it is not so easy. You don't buy a box with books and recipes. The strategy must be adapted to the culture, the pace of life, the style of thinking.

"It takes a lot of work, and you must have a commitment from everyone. You must be willing to make mistakes. You cannot be afraid to try."

KinderCare, teachers debate chain's rules

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Soon after the day care center where she worked was sold 13 months ago, teacher Betty Dell began seeing changes that troubled her.

Teachers were told to write down the number of children in their rooms every hour so that any staff over the state-mandated minimum could be sent home. That would sometimes leave the teachers shorthanded if a child had a potty-training accident or some other emergency.

At the end of the day, when other teachers' shifts had ended, Dell said she was sometimes left alone with 15 children at a time, five over the number allowed by law. At other times, children were moved around to avoid having to call in more workers.

All of this happened not at a struggling mom-and-pop operation, but at the bright and sunny child care center in the Rangos Building of Children's Hospital in Oakland, attended by the sons and daughters of the doctors, nurses and other staff.

The policies that upset Dell came from the center's new operator, KinderCare Learning Centers, the single largest provider of child care in the United States. KinderCare had taken over at Children's when it bought the smaller chain that had held the contract.

The KinderCare approach extended to curriculum, Dell said.

Teachers no longer had time in their work days to prepare lesson plans based on the children's interests. So they either prepared them on their own time, or used a lesson plan furnished by KinderCare headquarters in Montgomery, Ala.

Meanwhile, the center was charging \$148 a week for infants and toddlers, among the highest tuitions in Allegheny County.

Dell, who got a raise from KinderCare and an award for her work in child safety, was not the only employee who didn't like the new conditions. Three others told similar stories.

By the end of 1995, all had quit.

Judy Alvarez, coordinator of KinderCare's 16 centers in the region, insisted that the Rangos operation has the same quality it had under the previous owner.

She attributed the former employees' dissat-

isfaction to culture shock.

"Change is always difficult," Alvarez said. "These employees had trouble adjusting to a large corporation vs. a small, privately owned chain. People don't always understand why a big corporation operates the way it does."

No child care corporation is bigger than KinderCare, which runs more than 1,100 centers nationally.

A publicly traded corporation, it posted earnings of \$22 million in 1995. While it used to build all its own centers, it now expands primarily through acquisitions, buying up smaller chains and independent operations.

One chain it bought was the Early Childhood Learning Centers, which operated the center at Children's. (The hospital's only involvement is the contract it negotiates with the provider, which includes a 25 percent discount for Children's employees).

As to the specific complaints by Dell and other employees who quit, Alvarez said KinderCare does not consciously fall below minimum staffing levels. But there is no way to avoid people calling off sick or quitting without notice, she said.

"Staffing is a problem sometimes, and it might take a little while to get a substitute. But that is the exception."

Alvarez also makes no apologies for moving children around or sending staffers home, although neither happens very often, she said.

"Our parents provide our income base. They want us to use their money wisely. If we have extra people, they're going to go home."

As for the lesson plans, she said, KinderCare headquarters does a lot of the work so that the teachers don't have to. Given the uneven training of child care workers across the country, she added, sound lesson plans ensure that children get appropriate activities.

Bonnie Malovitz, the center's director, said that when the staff first learned the business had been sold, there was a lot of trepidation about what KinderCare's policies would be.

But the fears proved unfounded, in her opinion.

Patty Schwerin agreed. "It's different now, not better or worse," said Schwerin, who teaches 4- and 5-year-olds.

"There are more rules and more paperwork — parents really notice the paperwork — but

the care is the same."

State inspection reports for May 1995, the month KinderCare took over, showed only three minor violations.

Malovitz said her staff was decimated last winter by a flu epidemic, and that might have raised the frustration level of the workers who later quit. She has since beefed up her roster of qualified substitutes.

Sandra Scarr, CEO of KinderCare, believes that there is too much emphasis on staffing levels in child care anyway, and not enough on the quality of the interaction between teachers and children.

"We certainly comply with the regulations of every state we operate in," Scarr said. "But good programs are good programs. Whether you've got 10 or 12 preschoolers with a teacher is less important than whether the teacher provides a rich experience with great learning."

Betty Dell doesn't believe the two can be separated.

"I don't think it's OK to run the staff so short that the slightest thing puts you out of compliance" with state regulations, she said.

"KinderCare might not look at that as a quality issue. But I don't know what else to call it."

For independent care center, it's life on a financial tightrope

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



Every day, Trish Carroll walks a tightrope between survival and catastrophe.

But that shouldn't be any surprise, since Carroll is the director of a day care center — the nonprofit Sewickley Care and Development Center in Edgeworth.

Paper-thin financial security is a fact of life at most day care facilities, especially the independent "mom-and-pop" centers like Carroll's.

"Nearly 100 percent of them do it out of the best intentions, with no idea about what they're getting into," said Steve Woods, who mentors many day care providers in a program sponsored by Louise Child Care.

"Centers in affluent areas can make it by charging more, but it's a fragile situation in low-income areas," he said.

Carroll doesn't fit easily into either category.

Despite the fancy address, Carroll's enrollees include not just children of doctors and lawyers, but those of welfare families and the working poor.

The center is located in the basement and first floor of a former Presbyterian church, and while Carroll has worked hard to fix things up, it's so cramped that she had to move her "office" into the front hall. For awhile, the Xerox machine was in the bathroom, before she got rid of the copier (it was important, but too expensive).

The basement also flooded once, causing much of the tile to peel off the floor, but it wasn't fixed by the landlord until — to her great relief — she was cited by a state inspector.

The basement has new carpeting now, and there are new, safer cabinets, and cribs for the babies, bought with \$2,500 Carroll raised last year from two yard sales and three candy drives.

On her wish list: new playground equipment, new cots for the children and a "break room" for the staff.

Besides being a fund-raiser, she has about 29

other jobs, which include running the center, cooking lunch and substituting for sick caregivers. When the center runs out of paper towels, who goes to the store? Carroll.

She declined to provide financial details about her center, but said she doesn't expect to ever make much money, not like the for-profits, which follow the formula of picking an area with an expanding population of a lot of young people with little kids.

Carroll's center has 37 children, and that's fine with her. She'd like a bigger space, but in the meantime, she focuses on creating quality within the space she's been given. One good indicator of that: her staff gets paid health benefits, and they get four weeks of vacation after five years at the center.

"I have a very dedicated group of people. They have all been here for a long time, our children are happy, and that says a world for the center."

But life at the center is often precarious.

Last summer, the staff nearly didn't get paid, after a dispute with the state over a welfare mother's reimbursement.

The state refused to reimburse her for \$3,000 worth of care for the welfare client, and the only thing that saved the payroll was an emergency infusion of cash from a member of her board.

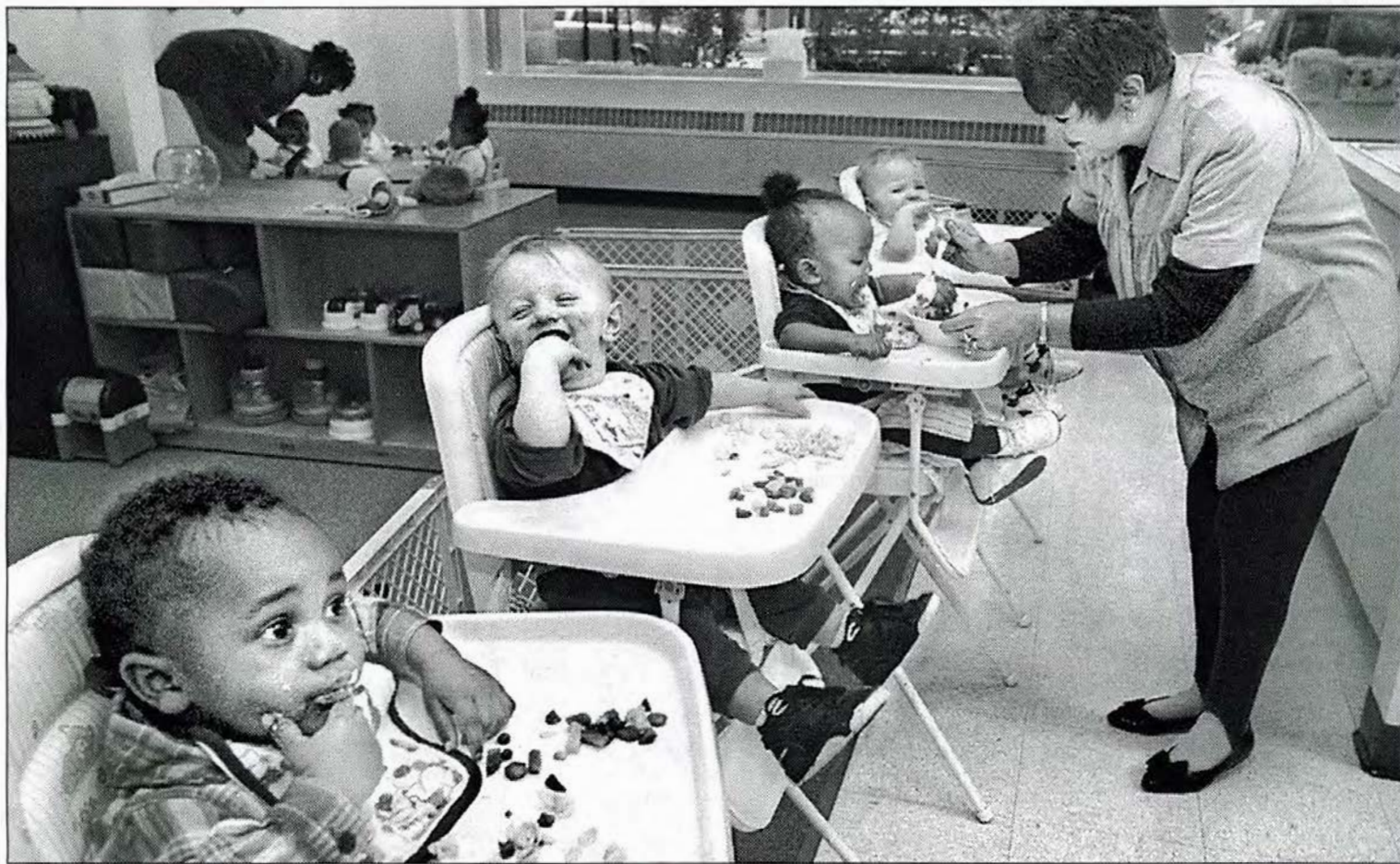
Payment disputes with the welfare department happen all too often, Carroll said.

But unlike many centers that shy away from low-income clients because the state reimbursement level is lower than their full rate, Carroll welcomes them.

"There's a need out there," she said. "People are trying to get back on their feet, they're trying to get back to work, instead of sucking up the money."

So she'll take welfare mothers' children — even if it requires the occasional rescue by friends.

"They saved us," she laughs, then pauses. "For now."



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Companies are slowly beginning to help employees with child care as a way to recruit and keep good workers. At Child Care on Smithfield, a day care center funded by 12 Pittsburgh businesses, children are fed their lunch. Babies, left to right, are Akil Malone, Nathan Fields, Klay Walker and Jacob Panyon.

Nationally, companies recognize need to help with family care

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



In St. Louis, McDonnell Douglas Corp. operates a pilot program called the "Homework Control Center" — a hot line to help high school and junior high students with math and science.

John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance has "Kids-To-Go," vacation activities in the Boston area for children of working parents.

And Stride Rite has converted a portion of its Massachusetts headquarters into an "intergenerational" day care center for em-

ployees' children and their elderly parents, including an adult literacy program.

Clearly, more and more companies are recognizing that good work performance doesn't occur in a vacuum.

With two-working-parent families becoming the norm, these businesses and many others are seeing a connection between productivity and employees' peace of mind about family responsibilities, particularly child care.

Compassion isn't the motive here. Companies aren't suddenly instituting "work-family" or "life-balance" policies to be nice, their executives say.

Instead, the policies are aimed at recruiting and keeping good

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Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

The need for child care will increase as the economy and welfare reform force more mothers into the workplace. Signs like this one, held by Jennifer Anderson of the Children's Defense Fund, were used to dramatize the problem during a rally last year. But Congress has shown little desire to expand child care benefits. Some corporations have adopted child care policies, but that hasn't helped many workers.

workers as markets become more competitive.

"The future will separate the true 'preferred employers' from the companies that merely throw those words around," said William Therrien, human resources vice-president for Prudential Insurance Co. of America. "Successful companies are the ones that can retain skilled employees by helping them balance work-life responsibilities. A lot of management doesn't see it yet, but it's out there and it's coming."

Still, not everyone is overjoyed by these initiatives.

Some critics say that such benefits as on-site day care or flextime are aimed at enabling workers to put in even longer hours than they do already, and may cut into parenting time even further.

Regardless of the companies' motives, though, there is no mistaking the growth of these company programs, which often go far beyond offering day care.

There are "a whole array of innovations designed to help working parents juggle chaotic schedules. Companies are seeing the answer holistically," said Ellen Galinsky, a New York-based consultant who advises companies on work-family programs.

Forget government

Part of the reason business is stepping in to help working parents with their child care problems is because government, for the most part, won't.

There is the federal child-care tax credit, but critics maintain it doesn't do much to help the typical working family. The credit ranges from a low of \$480 for a one-child family earning more than \$28,000 a year to a high of \$1,440 for lower-income families with two or more children. And because the tax credit can only be taken if there is a tax liability, many working poor families can't use it because they don't owe any taxes in the first place.

There is also \$150 million in federal block grant money set aside each year to improve the quality of day care, but current Congressional proposals would cut that figure to \$85 million.

And while there are child care vouchers for the working poor, the program is underfunded, and there are huge waiting lists in every state.

Providing child care assistance for anyone other than the working poor or welfare families has always been a tough sell in Congress.

That's why the momentum is coming from the corporate suite.

Recent studies have found that about 5,600 major American employers are now providing some kind of child care support, up from nearly nothing 15 years ago.

Most of the reasons are business-related, but some come from personal experience.

DeLoitte & Touche LLP one of the nation's biggest accounting firms, recently in-

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stituted a part-time policy for employees, and offers "busy-season" day care in offices on Saturdays from January through April, the peak tax filing season. Both benefits were almost unheard of previously in the accounting field.

One reason for the change: DeLoitte Touche's CEO, Michael Cook, saw the conflicts faced by his two grown daughters when they had to juggle family matters and their high-powered careers on Wall Street.

Moreover, the firm "had just began to see women in whom the company had invested significant amounts of resources leaving — a 20- to 25-percent departure rate annually. It was a straight money issue for them," added Mary Kay Leonard, of Boston-based Work-Family Directions, which advises companies on dependent care issues.

DeLoitte & Touche isn't alone. Last summer, IBM and 20 other major corporations announced the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care, a six-year, \$100 million pledge to help employees with problems ranging from child care to ailing parents.

Companies in the collaboration compete with each other on other fronts, but dependent care issues are so huge and so costly, and government help so minimal, that "U.S. companies are taking on new roles that in other industrial societies are unheard of or unnecessary," said Bradley K. Googins, director of the Center on Work and Family at Boston University.

Dollars and sense

Advocates of "family friendly" policies also say they pay dividends in real dollars.

For every \$1 spent on family resource programs, there's a \$2 yield in direct savings to businesses from increased productivity and reduced turnover and retraining costs, said Leonard.

At Johnson & Johnson, absenteeism among employees who used the company's flexible time and family leaves averaged 50 percent less than for the work force as a whole.

AT&T found that the average cost of giving new parents unpaid leave of up to one year was 32 percent of an employee's annual salary, compared with 150 percent to replace the leave-taker altogether.

In addition, a 1995 study by DuPont of 18,000 of its employees found that those who used DuPont's work-life programs were 45 percent more likely "to strongly agree" that they will "go the extra mile to make sure DuPont succeeds" than those who didn't use the programs or were not aware of



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Children from a day care center in Washington, D.C. whose mothers are being treated for drug and alcohol abuse look at the White House after a rally in Lafayette Park against child care budget cuts last fall.

them.

Despite these encouraging signs, however, there is still a gap between policy and practice in many companies.

In a 1993 survey of 80 top corporations by Work/Family Directions, 85 percent said they had "flexible work programs" — but fewer than 2 percent of their employees actually used at-home work, job sharing or part-time work; and only a quarter used flextime.

Why? For starters, only half of the company policies were in writing, and most were implemented at the discretion of managers, many of whom were resistant.

Other obstacles: Even when companies offer flextime, they often exert informal pressure on employees to work 9-to-5 days. There is still a strong belief in "face time" — the concept that unless employees can be watched by a manager, they won't be productive.

And then there is the vast range of smaller businesses that can't afford to offer child care or family-friendly benefits.

A two-tiered system

Boston University's Googins said that spells trouble for two reasons.

First, it means we are heading toward a two-tiered system of day care in the U.S. — one that benefits children whose parents work for "the Fortunate 500" companies, and another whose parents aren't so lucky.

Second, the more that businesses step into the breach to help with child care, the more it lets parents and public policy-makers off the hook, dampening any national sense of urgency to improve child care.

"If we happen to work at the right companies, we know our kids are going to be taken care of, and we're apt to get less agitated about child care, and this whole initiative may not be, ironically, contributing to a sense of community around these issues."

The fact that businesses have to take the lead on day care and family policies, Googins said, is "a sad commentary on our society and the value it places on child care."

Finally, he and others say, there is one other disturbing question: How important

are the children to these companies?

Some family advocates, for instance, say that flextime doesn't really help children or families.

"A workday that starts or ends at a different time does not create more time for family togetherness," said Jan Fletcher, who runs a business out of her home in Columbia, Wash., and has written on these issues for *Mothering* magazine.

Instead of making flextime or child care more readily available, she argued, companies should promote policies that allow parents to spend more time with their children: working the same number of hours over fewer days, known as "compressed workweeks"; job sharing; voluntary reduced work hours; at-home work; extended leaves and gradual re-entry programs.

"Day care is still intended to get children out of the way so mothers can work in a traditional way in a workplace-as-usual," added Chicago Tribune columnist Joan Beck.

In some cases, Googins said, the child care provided by companies seems to be intended to encourage employees to work more and more overtime.

He recently toured a company, which he declined to name, whose employees told him that after they pick up their children from 10 hours at an on-site day care facility, they take the youngsters back to the office so they can work some more.

There's also a trend among some big law firms to provide Saturday day care, since lawyers are routinely expected to work six-day weeks.

"Whose benefit is this?" he argues. "Is this for the child or the company? Let's face it, these workers are leaving their children in day care for longer and longer hours, and it's for the company's convenience. At some point, someone has to take a look at this issue and say, 'Is this in the best interest of the child?'"

"In the end, which comes first? Is it family and work? Or is it work and family? That's a question we as a society just haven't been prepared to answer."

Federal government has been slow to respond to care issues



Here is a brief history of the involvement of the federal government in child care issues:

■ **DURING WORLD WAR II**, the federal government ran 3,000 day care centers for about 1.5 million children, but closed them when the war ended.

■ **IN 1965**, the government launched Head Start, providing poor children ages 3 to 5 with half-day early childhood education programs of high quality, although only 40 percent of those eligible for the program participate because of limited dollars.

■ **IN 1968**, the Child and Adult Care Food Program was enacted, subsidizing nutritious meals for children at eligible day care centers and family day care homes.

■ **IN 1971**, conservative groups persuaded President Nixon to veto legislation that would have established a network of federally funded day care centers, available to all parents on a sliding fee schedule.

■ **IN 1974**, a program dubbed Title XX was created that eventually became the Social Service Block Grant, providing federal dollars to the states that can be used for improving child



Richard Nixon
Vetoed federally funded day care centers in 1971

care.

■ **IN 1976**, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit was enacted, allowing parents to deduct a small amount of child care expenses for children under 13. But the credit cannot be used to obtain a tax refund, so low-income families owing no income tax do not benefit.

■ **IN 1981**, federal regulations for child care were abolished by the Reagan administration just before they were due to go into effect.

■ **IN 1987**, the Act for Better Child Care was introduced. It was the first major legislation addressing day care for middle-class fami-

lies since the early 1970s. It proposed child care assistance for low- and middle-income families, and national standards to regulate child care. But help for the middle class and the national standards were eliminated. The bill eventually became the 1990 Child Care and Development Block Grant.

■ **IN 1988**, the Family Support Act created a program that for the first time guaranteed child care for welfare parents working or receiving job training or schooling through the federal Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program. The act also provided one year of Transitional Child Care money for parents who had left welfare for work.

■ **IN 1990**, Congress passed the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and a second program, the Title IV-A "At Risk" program. The block grant provided child care assistance for some working parents and a small amount of money for quality improvements. It also said states getting the money had to require day care providers to meet minimal standards on health, safety and training; the "at risk" program provided direct subsidies to working parents who risked sliding back into welfare.

5 main types of day care assistance

According to a 1995 survey of 1,050 U.S. companies by Hewitt Associates, an Illinois consulting firm, 85 percent of employers provided some type of child care assistance in 1995, up from 64 percent in 1990. The main types of assistance:

■ **RESOURCE AND REFERRAL.** About 40 percent of all companies provided this. R&R is often helpful for employees without the time or ability to locate good child care, learn how licensing works, or know what quality is. For legal reasons, though, R&Rs do not tell people whether one center is better than another, or whether any complaints have been lodged against a facility.

■ **DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE PLANS.** Ninety-six percent of the companies surveyed offered this. Employees can put up to \$5,000 of their salaries into a tax-free spending account to pay for child care or elder care. It's a use-it-or-lose-it account, with any balance reverting to the company at the end of the year, although that rarely happens, company officials say.

■ **FLEXIBLE OR ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULES.** Sixty-seven percent of all companies permitted these arrangements. They included flextime (offered at 73 percent of companies with flexible scheduling); job sharing, with two or more employees sharing a full-time slot (36 percent); compressed workweeks, which allow the same number of hours over fewer days (21 percent); or working at home (19 percent).

■ **SEMINARS, COUNSELING.** Sessions on family and school problems are frequently offered.

■ **CHILD CARE.** Includes discounts for care at preapproved places. Fewer than 2 percent of firms offer this. A few firms — NationsBank, American Express, The Travelers and Xerox — provide subsidies for child care.



Children from Child Care on Smithfield walk past a panhandler on Smithfield Street after playing at Mellon Park.

Field of dreams

Businesses help build model center on Smithfield, then bow out



If we build it, they will come. That's what members of Pittsburgh's corporate, charitable and political community thought when they chipped in funds to start a day care center at 1 Smithfield Street in 1992.

Child Care On Smithfield was conceived as a model for the nation, a shining illustration of what could happen when businesses and government banded together to build an excellent child care center.

It would be a state-of-the-art facility providing care for 79 children, with ratios so low that there would be one adult for every 2½ infants — a rare and expensive luxury in a state that requires a minimum of one adult for four infants.

The center would pay for untrained staffers to go back to school for their associate degrees in child development, and

*story by
mackenzie carpenter*

*photographs by
robin rombach*

would pay them higher salaries than normal.

And at least 30 percent of its children would come from low-income families on state subsidies.

Mark Bibro, executive director of Louise Child Care, was so convinced of the center's importance that he agreed to run it without charging administrative fees.

But almost from the get-go, the center

WHO CARES?

DAY CARE IN AMERICA

Day 4: June 5, 1996



Brenda Moore, assistant group supervisor at Child Care on Smithfield, waits with toddlers to cross Smithfield Street during a walk downtown to Mellon Park. Moore was showing the children how to watch for the walk sign to cross the street. The children are, from left, Timmy Livolsi, Taylor Ray-Jetter, Alexis Boyden, Kelly McAndrews and Lukas McGowan. Below, Moor gives McKenzie Bell, 2, a piggy-back ride after changing her diaper, while assistant group supervisor Raquel Davis changes Kelly McAndrews. The large room at the center is divided into smaller classrooms where children are placed by age.



has had trouble financially.

There's a fundamental reason why, Bibro believes: because corporate sponsorship of the day care center stopped the day it opened.

It's a phenomenon that happens all too often. Many businesses provide money to build day care centers, but back off from any further commitments, like tuition subsidies for employees.

High quality day care is expensive — with a total cost of about \$10,000 annually per child. Most parents cannot or will not pay that, so somebody else has to subsidize it.

That didn't happen at Child Care On Smithfield.

The center has lost about \$120,000 a year for each of the years it's been running. And when Bibro approached representatives of the 12-company consortium that initially funded the center, asking for additional help, "it was clear there was no more money available for operating costs," he said.

Aggravating the problem were the

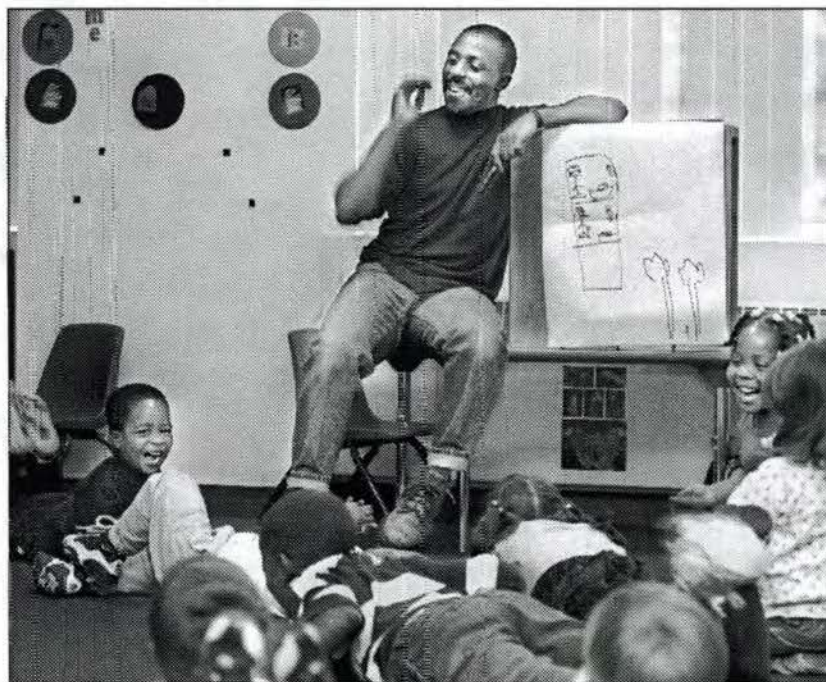
WHO CARES?

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At right, Alan Carter, a group supervisor at Child Care on Smithfield, draws out a story as he tells it to his pre-school class before lunch. The center's location Downtown makes it convenient for parents to visit their children during their lunch hours. Above, Rosalyn McCorkle, a lawyer with the County Law Department at nearby Fort Pitt Commons, visits her daughter Taylor.



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built-in losses from taking subsidized children, since the state only reimburses 75 percent of a center's fees.

The center's founders had known that would be a drain on the budget, but they hadn't counted on another problem: a sudden boom in day care centers Downtown.

The center could break even with a minimum of 72 children, and three years ago, there was reason to believe almost every space would be filled.

Not anymore. With several companies laying off employees, there is now a glut of day care. That has already helped force the YMCA Downtown to close its day care center. And Child Care On Smithfield has only 56 children.

While United Way, the center's landlord, charges the center a below-market rental rate of \$100,000 annually, and has contributed \$210,000 in extra subsidies since the center opened, that wasn't enough to get the center over the hump.

Just in the last month, the center has found a little breathing room. The United Way kicked in additional money to help with this year's rent, and some private charities contributed more operating and scholarship aid.

But the corporate community will have to commit even more money if quality is to stay high, Bibro warned. The center already charges \$135 a week per child, more than most other facilities Downtown, and in the current competitive market, it can't afford to raise fees much further.

"We won't cut corners. We won't reduce salaries or staffing levels. We're committed to keeping that center open," Bibro said. "But we need help."



Alan Carter spends a few moments with Alysia Mahonney, 3, while she plays on the playground at Child Care on Smithfield. Carter is a group supervisor at the Downtown center.

On-site care derailed by cost, worker ambivalence

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



On-site day care is usually one of the first child care benefits employees say they want.

And it's usually the last thing a company is willing to pay for.

Only 13 percent of all major U.S. companies provide some form of on-site day care, and the numbers are not growing astronomically.

The reasons are simple: money and office politics.

It costs at least \$1 million to start up a day care center, and much more than that to keep it afloat.

Then there's the sometimes delicate question of where the day care center should be built: at company headquarters, where the highest-paid employees work, or in one of a company's numerous branches.

"Frankly, that's why we've taken an extremely conservative approach to what we're doing," said Vicki Clites, executive assistant to Giant Eagle Chairman David Shapira.

"With 10,000 employees in our retail stores across three states, we can't with any conscience offer child care for our headquarters and not offer it for our people who are making \$4.50 an hour working four hours a day for us. It's the inequity we can't live with."

Jane Fulton, of Louise Child Care, remembers developing a proposal for an on-site day care center for Pittsburgh's local AT&T division nearly a decade ago. Employees wanted it; the Communications Workers of America promised to chip in some funds; local management signed off on it.

"But it died when it got up to New Jersey," at AT&T's headquarters. "It was so frustrating. We put all that work into it, and nothing came of it," she said.

Part of the problem, said AT&T spokesman Burke Stinson, was that most of the company's employees in different

branches around the country preferred day care in their neighborhoods. Pittsburgh employees were among the few who actively pushed for an on-site location.

The company felt it would be unfair to give one set of workers an on-site center, and not do the same for others, Stinson said.

A survey at Westinghouse five years ago found employees had little desire for day care at company headquarters, said Reynolds Clark, an executive with the company's foundation — in part because most of them live in the suburbs.

Many suburban employees don't want to truck their toddlers through crowded traffic and tunnels to a Downtown center, when they could use one within blocks of their homes.

"I know many parents who wouldn't drive every day on Route 51 into town to a day care center if their life depended on it," said Martha Isler, who has advised local Pittsburgh companies on child care issues.

On-site care is not for everyone, she added.

"Part of it is the age of the child. If you're nursing, you want on-site care. But then there's that neighborhood attachment that kicks in, and kids begin to socialize. That's when many people want care near their homes."

But others say that people who resist on-site centers simply don't know what they're missing.

"If the question on a survey was asked, 'Would you like an on-site center or one in your neighborhood?' of course they're going to say what they know," said Marlene Weinstein, a consultant who has helped companies establish such centers. "But if you ask people who have done both what they would prefer, they often say on-site."

That's because on-site centers tend to be of extremely high quality, she said.

Indeed, many companies today are proudly touting their new centers. Johnson & Johnson has four magnificent day care centers — one of them, at headquarters, designed by renowned architect I.M. Pei.

At Lego Systems Inc., the Enfield, Conn.-

based toymaker, the day care center's facade resembles a castle made out of — you guessed it — Lego bricks, while inside, children up to age 12 play and get help with their homework.

At the Lily Pond Country Day School, run by Du Pont de Nemours & Co., the complex is divided up into "exploratoriums" — one for science projects, one for music, even a kitchen where children learn math concepts by cooking.

Such places are more like palaces, with huge waiting lists, and that begs the question: Does the day care system benefit as a whole when a company decides to build a showplace for just a few?

Weinstein thinks so. "You have got to have strong models out there," she said. "Also, the parents at these centers become consumers elsewhere" when they leave their companies, and they will then push for higher quality day care elsewhere.

But even in the face of such successes, Pittsburgh employers are skittish about initiating new programs.

There is Child Care on Smithfield, which was built with funds from 12 local companies, complete with a get-well room for sick children; two centers at local shopping malls; and Giant Eagle's "Eagle's Nest," a drop-in center for grocery shoppers.

But most of the on-site centers in this region have been built by hospitals and universities, not other businesses. And even there, the picture is changing. After a surge in hospital day care centers during a nursing shortage in the 1980s, at least two of 18 hospitals with on-site care have closed their centers now that the shortage is over.

One consultant who has conducted surveys for local companies said she was instructed to warn employees not to assume that any favorable decisions had been made.

"We've had to say about 5 million times to respondents, we're not looking to establish on-site child care — this is just a survey. The company tells us, 'We just don't want to get their hopes up.'"

N.C. bank creates model plan; why not here?

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C.



he on-site day care center at NationsBank's corporate headquarters is magnificent.

Its staffers have fistfuls of child development degrees. Its rooms feature skylights and doors that open onto two "developmentally appropriate" playgrounds. An open kitchen area lets the children talk to the cooks. And there's even a smiling security guard named "Buddy."

What is more startling, though, is that this center, and the whole constellation of other "work-family" programs that the company provides, are the brainchild of its top executive, Hugh McColl.

As CEO of NationsBank, the fourth largest banking firm in the country, McColl is known as one tough businessman. His scorched-earth corporate takeover style has earned him a reputation as an aggressive payroll-slasher.

The former Marine even keeps a hand grenade on his desk, and hands out crystal replicas of it to valued employees.

So why is a bomb-throwing type like McColl building on-site day care for employees, or helping them pay for child care? Or encouraging them to volunteer in their child's school for two hours a week — with no loss of salary? Or allowing workers to follow reduced, flexible work schedules with no loss of benefits?

"We have a very progressive CEO," said Kimberly Hains, the company's dependent care strategies manager.

And a very smart CEO.

When he took over, McColl noticed that the bank was suffering significant turnover every year. Three-fourths of his company's 66,000 employees are women, and many of them were leaving to take care of children.

"Some of our most promising females in the company were not returning from maternity leave," Hains said. And in lower-level positions, people found it difficult to work and afford child care.

Since the bank estimates that it costs 150 percent of someone's salary to replace them — not to mention customer distress at losing a familiar face — it didn't take McColl long to figure out what to do.

Since the bank's new work-family programs were introduced in 1988, turnover rate among employees using them has been 35 percent lower than for those who haven't taken advantage of them; and 62 percent of employees surveyed said the programs had

affected their decision to stay at the bank.

Moreover, nearly one-third of the employees used the day care subsidy to change to higher-quality child care — the program rewards participants with a higher subsidy if they use licensed care.

NationsBank isn't alone.

Several top banks have invested in similar initiatives to keep their mostly female employees, especially in markets where the economies are growing and workers are in demand. New York-based J.P. Morgan and Chase Manhattan, San Francisco's Bank of America and NationsBank's Charlotte competitor, First Union, are among them.

Different story here

But in Pittsburgh, where new employment opportunities are dampened by a sluggish economy, banks don't face the same pressures.

At PNC, Mellon and National City Bank (formerly Integra), there isn't anything like NationsBank's comprehensive approach. Instead, employees say, there is flexibility-by-fiefdom: if you're lucky enough to get an understanding manager, you may be able to win the boss over on getting a part-time schedule after the baby is born, or using flextime so you can pick up your child at day care.

As for help with child care? Forget it.

"We have nothing for child care — no referrals, no subsidies, nothing," said Holly Merriman, senior human resources consultant for National City Bank.

At PNC Bank, there are dependent care accounts, where employees can set aside tax-free money from their paychecks to cover child care expenses, and there is an employee assistance program that provides counseling for family problems. But there are no direct subsidies for child care, said spokesman Jonathan Williams.

Of the big three local banks, Mellon is frequently cited by employees as the most inflexible of all.

Former employee Carmen Segree said her life at Mellon was "very difficult" after her child was born in the late 1980s.

"It was a pretty rigid environment. You would be five minutes late for work, and you definitely had some serious eye contact from your co-workers," Segree remembered. Segree, a high-level market analyst, maneuvered herself into a different division, where the supervisor was sympathetic to her needs, before quitting to take a job in 1992 at United Way.

But even with an understanding boss, "if there was a child care crisis, it was tough ex-

plaining it away" to her colleagues. They worked together in a culture that "made you feel guilty that you had these children who were inconveniencing work productivity."

On paper, Mellon lists several "family-friendly" policies. There are work-family seminars and dependent care accounts. There also are flextime and part-time schedules, and of the company's 24,000 employees, 3,500 either work part-time or in a job-sharing arrangement.

But the fundamental difference between the approach to workplace benefits in Pittsburgh's banks and the philosophy in Charlotte is that here, they are seen as perks, doled out to employees who perform well.

At NationsBank, benefits are provided up front to everyone, in the expectation that performance will improve.

Michael Roark, executive vice president for human resources at Mellon, said "we try to accommodate the employee wherever possible." But he noted that the bank does not compete in regions with worker shortages. "We're not in Charlotte, we're not in L.A.; we're in a very different job market," Roark said.

But workers within the company say there's another way to look at the difference — Mellon simply doesn't value its employees as much.

"The atmosphere at Mellon is, if you want to leave, don't let the door hit you in the behind. We can replace you tomorrow," said one employee who recently left for a job with a health care firm despite offers of more money by Mellon.

Another longtime woman employee at Mellon said that after her first baby was born, she had to push the company to grant her a three-day-a-week schedule. Mellon then asked her to change to working fewer hours over four days, which she reluctantly agreed to, even though she had to add another day's worth of child care expenses.

Now, the employee is pregnant again, but after thinking long and hard about it, she has decided not to try fighting the same battles with Mellon for part-time or work-at-home arrangements. After her next child is born, she said, "I'm outta here."

Roark took issue with those employees' accusations, and said many other employees have expressed satisfaction with the bank's programs.

And at National City, Merriman said she hopes more progressive policies may soon emerge.

Once the turmoil from the purchase of Integra dies down, "we might become more introspective and start thinking about ways to support the work force of the 90s, to be more competitive and seek nontraditional ways of rewarding our people," she said.

Pittsburgh business: Behind the curve

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Pittsburgh's major businesses move in packs. When a blizzard hits, they call each other to see who else is closing early before they let their own employees go home.

The same is true when it comes to addressing the child care needs of their employees.

Reynolds Clark, chairman of the Westinghouse Foundation, the charitable arm of the company, calls it "emotional benchmarking."

"Nobody wants to be way out in front," said Clark, "because then they're liable to be scrutinized in terms of what's this costing the company to do this; and yet nobody wants to be a laggard either, and everyone seems to be trying to find that middle ground that's very hard to define." Conformist. Conservative.

Intentionally or not, those were the images conjured up by representatives of Pittsburgh businesses during a round-table discussion at the Post-Gazette, when they were asked to describe company attitudes toward child care for employees.

That March 19 meeting came two and a half months before the United Way board of directors voted for a groundbreaking \$60 million early childhood initiative that, if implemented, will make the region a pioneer in providing high quality care for poor children.

But that project is the brainchild of the city's philanthropic community, not its businesses, and will have little direct impact on the average worker.

Overall, Pittsburgh comes out looking relatively staid when compared with firms elsewhere in the nation:

- When 21 corporations pledged \$100 million last summer to assist employees with child care and other dependent care issues, not a single Pittsburgh-based corporation was among them.
- While 12 local companies did pool funds to start a day care center at 1 Smithfield Street Downtown, there is only one known on-site day care center operated by a business in this town other than a hospital or university. Nationally, 13 percent of the nation's largest businesses have on-site day care.
- A 1994 survey of 80 Pittsburgh companies found that we lag in other work-family benefits, too; only 2 percent allowed employees to work at home, for example, while 19 to 35 percent of companies nationally permit at-home work, different surveys have shown.

The company officials who gathered at the Post-Gazette felt Pittsburgh's lack of progressive child care policies is largely due to demographics.



Vicki Clites
Giant Eagle lets moms work part-time



Reynolds Clark
Sees "emotional benchmarking"

The region has the third oldest population in the nation, behind Tampa-St. Petersburg and Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, which means that there are plenty of elderly relatives available for cheap or free child care, said Rosemary Bufalini, human resources director at Blue Cross of Western Pennsylvania.

"You have lots of grandparents and aunts that continue to do this," she said.

But the numbers don't exactly bear out the notion that a disproportionate amount of child care in Pittsburgh is being provided by family members.

Day care use average

In fact, day care usage here seems to mirror that in the rest of

the country, and might be a bit higher.

In 1990, there were 49,031 children under 6 in Allegheny County in homes where both parents worked. That figure probably hasn't changed much, given this region's stagnant population. And as of February, there were 25,616 day care slots available in Allegheny County.

Nobody knows exactly how many of those slots are filled. Providers report a glut of day care Downtown, but in other areas, there are long waiting lists.

If one were to assume that only two-thirds of them were filled at any given moment — say, 17,000 slots — that means about 35 percent of all children under 6 with working parents were in day care, compared with a national figure of about 31 percent.

Still, Giant Eagle's Vicki Clites is convinced that her company's work force is opting for cheaper care by relatives or neighbors.

"Day care centers are just too expensive for them," she said.

Pittsburgh businesses may also be feeling less pressure from employees for child care benefits for another reason — because the more lackluster economy here gives employees less leverage to ask for such programs.

With a less transient work force here than in Southern and Western states, companies don't feel pressured to provide the same kinds of extensive benefits packages to keep people in place.

The cost of good day care centers also may keep people out of them.

Not only do the 23 day care centers Downtown have plenty of empty spaces, but when American Thermoplastics became the first company outside of a hospital or university to open an on-site day care center, only two children enrolled.

The center, located in the Regional Industrial Development Corporation Park in O'Hara, has spaces for 35 children. After a year of

operation, it still has only 20 children, said Dian Suder, company marketing coordinator.

The center, which is losing money, charges employees \$90 a week, substantially below the average regional rate of \$130. Still, when workers found out that the care at the center wasn't free, they balked.

Attitudes may also affect day care use.

When Giant Eagle sponsored a seminar for its headquarters employees to discuss using the nearby American Thermoplastics center, six people showed up.

And even that small group was less than enthusiastic.

When she talked to the people at the seminar, Giant Eagle's Clites said, "They said, 'My husband isn't really sure we should put our child in a day care center' or 'My mother thinks it's a terrible thing for me to do.'"

Minimal assistance

Pittsburgh's conservatism means companies here usually offer only the most rudimentary child care help. The 1994 survey showed that more than half of the 80 Pittsburgh firms provided resource and referral — helping employees find good, convenient child care.

But almost none of the companies help their employees pay for child care.

That frustrates Giant Eagle's Clites.

Many of the grocery chain's employees work part-time and make only \$4.50 an hour, she said, and they "cannot possibly afford to go to a child care center without a significant subsidy from the corporation, and that's an extremely hard sell to our shareholders. It's a hard sell to our employees."

So how do they try to address that?

"Sad to say, we do nothing," Clites said. "Everyone comes to me and says, we could recruit better, we could retain better if we had some sort of child care, and I know that's true... but I don't know the answer to it."

Giant Eagle does offer flexible part-time hours as an alternative, and many workers take that option.

In fact, some authorities have suggested the best approach throughout the business world to accommodating company needs and parents' responsibilities might be the abolition of the 40-hour work week, so that more employees would work shorter schedules.

"Not in our lifetime," responded Reynolds Clark. "The expectation is you work more than 40 hours. We have flextime at Westinghouse — come in as early as 7, as late as 9, and then go home as early as 4, as late as 6. The joke is, you come in at 7, go home at 6. That's the new flextime."

In the end, Clark believes changes in companies' attitudes toward work and family here will come only when a new generation of working mothers and fathers take over top slots in management.

"Those who have experienced the frustration now, when they become the leaders, they'll make the change. You can't speed the clock," he said. "When they come into levels of leadership down the road, five or 10 years from now, hopefully they will have learned their lessons and say, 'We've got to make this change, and it can be done.'"

Corporations tight-lipped about policies

Getting representatives of some of the city's top corporations to sit down in one room and talk about child care policies was a challenge.

While executives from Giant Eagle, Westinghouse, Blue Cross and American Thermoplastics willingly showed up for the March 19 session at the Post-Gazette, along with representatives of child care assistance agencies, there were plenty of no-shows.

PNC Bank declined, saying its human resources director was new and too busy. Mellon Bank first asked to see questions in advance,

then declined when told the format would be an informal discussion group.

Alcoa was cautious at first. The company is known for some innovative approaches — including paying for child care when employees are on business trips — but "generally, we play a minor corporate role in providing or helping employees with day care. We think it's a private matter," said Alcoa's spokesman, Al Posti. Eventually, Alcoa Personnel Manager Anna May Litman accepted the invitation, but canceled at the last minute.

USX, in declining to participate, cited a company survey that found child care is not a top concern for its employees. The survey's findings, done as part of a contract agreement with the United Steelworkers union, were not widely publicized because "we didn't want to embarrass the union," said USX's Thomas Lauritzen.

And when was the survey done? "Six years ago," he said.

PG's policy is about average

How does the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette compare with other local companies on family and child care policies?

We, too, run in the middle of the pack. While the company's union employees have a variety of family and personal leave benefits written into their contracts, the company's 180 non-union workers have few formal policies permitting part-time work, job sharing or other flexible work arrangements.

Under federal law, all federally insured women employees are entitled to six weeks of paid maternity leave, and all employees can take 12 weeks of unpaid family leave.

The PG's union editorial employees are entitled to up to eight months of unpaid parental leave for

biological or adopted children.

For non-union employees, any flexible work schedules or expanded leaves are left to the discretion of individual managers. Human Resources Director Wayne Bjerregaard said the company also has granted requests for part-time work by non-union employees before and after family leaves.

The Post-Gazette has no on-site day care center; no pre-tax dependent care accounts, and no "cafeteria" benefit plans, which allow employees to choose among different options.

Bjerregaard, who formerly worked at American Cyanamid, noted that his previous employer provided on-site day care, job sharing, dependent care accounts and family counseling services.

"All of this takes money and a \$5 billion outfit such as American Cyanamid is simply generating a lot more cash to put in the infrastructure to make things happen. The PG is not in this position," he said.

WHO CARES?

DAY CARE IN AMERICA

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A light moment for the area's chief day care regulator: Louise Sutton, director for the 23-county Western Pennsylvania region, visits Child Care on Smithfield, Downtown.

Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

By the book

State often focuses on small problems without solving large ones

By Mackenzie Carpenter
and Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writers

Last summer, Gov. Ridge wanted to show that his administration was going to protect children in day care. So the governor came to Pittsburgh to announce a new order: Child care centers would be required to post their licensing inspection reports for everyone to see.

To dramatize the new rule, he accompanied a day care inspector from the Depart-

ment of Public Welfare through Louise Child Care's brand new, \$1 million center at Station Square.

But even this gleaming facility didn't get a clean bill of health that day. Instead, the inspector cited it for two violations: no marking strip on a glass door to remind children not to walk into it, and brackets left on a wall after a high shelf was removed. Both problems were fixed on the spot.

If the governor was surprised by the violations, he shouldn't have been. The state's day care code is so exacting, and the inspectors so hawk-eyed, that even the best cen-

ters rarely get a perfect score.

Some might derive comfort from that rigorous approach — except that on the same day Louise Child Care was cited, the Post Nursery/Nighty Care center in Philadelphia was still open for business, despite the fact that the state had been trying to shut it down since 1993.

And that pretty much sums up the state of child care regulation in Pennsylvania — plenty of bark, but very little bite.

For all its detailed health and safety standards, the state doesn't have many tools to enforce them.

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It can go to the extreme by seeking to revoke a center's license, but it's loath to do that, partly because the process takes so long, and partly because parents are then forced to find other child care.

In 1995 and 1996, only about one-half of 1 percent of all centers in the state had their licenses revoked, a record that prompted Georgetown University political scientist William Gormley to single out Pennsylvania for toothless enforcement in a recent book on day care.

Another problem: there are no intermediate sanctions, such as fines, for repeat offenders.

So officials resort to "provisional" licenses and nagging, and problems can thus persist for months and sometimes years.

Such weak enforcement, in fact, is found in most states.

And at least Pennsylvania is not Idaho.

There, anything goes: no limits on overcrowding, no minimum age requirements for staff, no background checks of employees, no unannounced inspections.

Then again, we're not Massachusetts, either. While Pennsylvania's 1-to-4 ratio of adult caregivers to infants is respectable, Massachusetts requires one adult for every three babies. And there, every licensing visit is a surprise, inspectors are required to have a "working knowledge" of child psychology and each center must have a "health care consultant."

Pennsylvania lies somewhere between those extremes. In fact, Working Mother magazine last month rated Pennsylvania a "3" out of a possible score of 4 in its rating of states for their commitment to safe, available, high-quality child care.

Loads of loopholes

While the state's system for monitoring day care is detailed and comprehensive, it's also riddled with loopholes and inequities.

Examples:

- The only time the state can close down a center quickly is in an absolute emergency, when it determines that children are in "imminent danger."

- For due process reasons, most centers can stay open during appeals of closure orders, and that can take two years or more.

- Enforcement is uneven. Since January 1995 in the Pittsburgh region, 30 illegally operating centers or family day care homes have been closed and ordered to apply for a license. In the Philadelphia area, which has almost twice as many day care centers and homes, only 12 illegal centers were shut down.

- Parents are not officially notified about suspected child abuse in day care facilities. If the state finds evidence of child abuse and decides to revoke a center's license, the center can remain open during its appeal. And because of confidentiality requirements, parents are only informed that the center is under a closure order — not why.

- Many church-run centers are unregulated. The state has allowed hundreds of these centers to operate without a license, even though state law clearly requires them to be inspected like everyone else.

- Summer camps and nursery schools are not required to be licensed by the welfare department. Nursery schools must be licensed by the Department of Education, but they permit one adult for up to 17 4-year-olds, compared with the welfare department's 1:10 requirement. And no yearly inspections of nursery schools are

HOW PA. COMPARES TO OTHER STATES



regulations.

Here's a quick summary of how Pennsylvania compares with other states on some key day care

degree that includes 30 credit hours in a child-related area of study and four years of experience. Other states require college degrees, but nowhere near the number of credit hours in early childhood education.

Group supervisors, who are called "lead" teachers or "master teachers" in other states, also are required in Pennsylvania to have either a bachelor's degree, an associate's degree or its equivalent in early childhood education, and two years of experience, something required by very few states.

RATIOS

While experts generally recommend a 1:3 staff-to-children ratio for babies, only three states require that: Kansas, Massachusetts and Maryland. Pennsylvania, along with 27 other states and the District of Columbia, requires a 1:4 ratio for babies up to 9 months. Other states have even higher ratio limits. Idaho, for example, allows one caregiver for 12 babies.

For children who are 18 months old, 15 states require one adult for every four children. Pennsylvania, along with 10 other states, has ratios of one adult for five children; the remaining states have more lenient ratio requirements.

GROUP SIZE

Many states don't limit overall group sizes, although experts have found that large groups of children have a negative effect on quality, regardless of how many adults are present. Pennsylvania, along with 17 other states, permits a maximum of eight children in any group of infants up to 9 months old.

For older toddlers, at 18 months, our state and 15 others allow no more than 10 children in a group. The rest of the states either have higher limits or none at all.

PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS

Pennsylvania has higher educational standards for its day care directors than any other state. It requires an associate's

WORKER TRAINING

Forty-six states, including Pennsylvania, require some form of provider training: either before an employee is hired, or during employment, or both.

In 1992, Pennsylvania began requiring six hours of annual training for day care center staffers after they'd been hired. That's on the low end of the scale nationally. Only four of the 45 other states require less than that.

There's no requirement about the kind of training they must receive. Staffers can clock hours in food service training, for example, even if their center doesn't provide hot lunches.

Most experts say that ongoing training isn't really effective until a person has taken more than 20 hours of instruction annually.

That happens in some states. Minnesota requires an educational background in early childhood education, plus 36 hours of annual ongoing training or 2 percent of hours worked, whichever is less. Wisconsin requires two hours of training per month for everyone except aides. Utah requires 40 hours of training in the first year, and 20 hours annually thereafter.

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required.

• There are serious licensing backlogs, particularly in eastern Pennsylvania. Some new after-school day care programs have waited up to a year to be licensed because inspectors have such heavy workloads. They opened anyway without licenses — with the implicit knowledge of the state.

• Some states require their inspectors to have a child development background or experience working in the field. Pennsylvania requires neither. Inspectors may be former parole officers or mental institution social workers.

• There are few unannounced inspections. Despite a surge of surprise visits last August in the wake of two day care deaths, virtually none has occurred since in the Philadelphia region, and they have slowed to a trickle in other parts of the state.

• Pennsylvania requires only six hours a year of ongoing training for day care employees — one of the lowest standards in the nation. To fulfill the requirement, staffers may take classes in food preparation or infant care — even if their centers don't provide those services. They may also learn through satellite broadcasts or videotapes, which experts say preclude the two-way communication that is necessary for meaningful instruction.

Weak enforcement?

Last year, the state closed only four centers under its "imminent danger" emergency powers.

They included two Creation Station day care facilities in Washington County, which were shut down after a child died at one of them from being locked inside a hot van; a family day care home in Luzerne County where a child drowned; and a center near Philadelphia, where an infant was temporarily locked inside after closing.

Officials have never used emergency powers to shut down centers for less serious offenses, like overcrowding or too few staff. Even though gross understaffing can create serious risks for children, they aren't considered in "imminent danger" because of it.

Instead of closing such a center immediately, state officials may seek a temporary court injunction to shut the center within a few weeks.

Even then, said Howard Ulan, senior attorney for the welfare department, the chances of getting an injunction often depend on how outrageous the situation is — which he dubbed the "gasp factor."

The state had just such a case when a baby was mistakenly locked inside the Happy Hearts Day Care Center in Norris-

town at the start of the New Year's weekend last December.

Officials were able to shut the facility right away because the director was nowhere to be found, and police had to break in to get the infant out.

The following week, the state moved to revoke the center's license, citing gross negligence in the director's failure to notice the baby asleep in a swing by the door. The center has appealed the order, but it has remained closed ever since.

That closure worked, Ulan said, because "when you tell people about the Happy Hearts case, there's a 100 percent gasp rate."

For the most part, though, centers in trouble are given an opportunity to correct their problems.

That happened in the case of the Sunnyside II Day Care Center in New Kensington.

In August 1995, two 5-year-old children wandered away from the facility, located in a quiet subdivision off a rural road, and were found a mile away, before any of the staffers noticed they were gone.

Despite the fact that the risk was probably greater to those children than to the baby left in the Norristown center, officials didn't close Sunnyside II. It had a good compliance record, and its operator was eager to correct any problems.

Instead, Sunnyside II's license was downgraded to provisional status for the next four months, and then, in January, the center was awarded a full one-year license because inspectors were convinced children would be well supervised in the future.

Actually, the incident at Sunnyside II is not all that uncommon, said Connie Whitson, executive director of the Montgomery County Office of Child Day Care.

A similar case occurred in Harrisburg in 1995, and "I've heard stories about kids wandering off that never get reported. Kids are fast, someone falls down, and the teacher is looking at that kid, and these others sneak away. It happens."

Slow process

In the few cases where the state seeks a license revocation and a center decides to fight it, the legal process can be exceedingly slow.

From late 1994 through May 30 of this year, 14 centers and family day care homes across Pennsylvania had their licenses either revoked or not renewed by the state.

All of them appealed the orders, and while four facilities closed in the interim, the rest are still open. One, the Post Nursery/Nighty Care in Philadelphia, was or-

dered to shut down in December 1993, and only last month did it exhaust all of its regulatory appeals. It is under an order to close by June 17.

Why does the process drag on so long?

For one thing, the half-dozen lawyers who decide whether to take a center to court have many other duties. Their first priority is to handle appeals of welfare eligibility and Medicaid denials. They also must work on licensing disputes involving personal care homes, residential care homes and nursing homes.

Then, there's the cumbersome legal machinery itself.

After a hearing is held, for example, lawyers for day care centers usually want transcripts of the hearings before filing briefs on the court case. "It typically takes a couple of weeks to get those transcripts," Ulan said, "and then lawyers will want 20 days for each side to respond to them, and on and on."

Short of seeking a revocation, state officials don't have access to many "in between" measures.

With no fines for centers that repeatedly flout the law, officials opt for provisional licenses instead — up to four of them, at six months each. If that fails, they'll seek revocation.

Is this weak enforcement?

"I'm not displeased about our enforcement capabilities," said Susan Miller, director of licensing at the welfare department. "We feel we take aggressive actions against facilities" when necessary.

And Ulan said it's wrong to rate a state's enforcement by how many centers it shuts down.

What's more important is the percentage of centers who take corrective action — which he says is fairly high, although the state doesn't keep exact figures.

Shutting down a center, on the other hand, creates "the very large, practical problem of where those people will go for service," he adds. "It imposes all sorts of burdens on parents."

Detail upon detail

If some feel Pennsylvania's enforcement is lightweight, they could never say that about its regulations manuals.

Pennsylvania's more than 200 day care regulations are contained in a 62-page rule book covering everything from styrofoam cups (strictly forbidden) to stairs (more than three steps shall be equipped with a handrail). For family day care homes, which have between four and six children, the rule book is 40 pages long; for group child care homes, which have between 7 and 12 children, it's 56 pages.

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State officials defend the attention to minutiae as evidence of a tough system that does what it's supposed to: protect children's rights and keep them safe.

But child care advocates complain that Pennsylvania's system leads to excessive nickel-and-diming that has nothing to do with quality — although many parents may think it does.

For instance, centers often are cited for having only one handwashing sign in a bathroom with two sinks; or a doctor's signature may be missing on a child's physical. Sometimes the infractions are more serious: too few providers for too many children, or harsh and demeaning language.

But many parents don't understand the difference between being cited for having White Out in an unlocked drawer and being overcrowded.

"We treat providers who violate the [staff] ratio requirements the same way we do those who don't have receptacle covers on their trash cans," complained Joan Benso, executive director of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, a children's advocacy organization based in Harrisburg. "It's a one-size-fits all mentality."

Louise Sutton, regional day care director for the 23-county western region, denied that.

The department does identify high-risk day care operations, she said, by honing in on the worst offenses: excessive staff-child ratios, overcrowding, inappropriate discipline, lack of supervision and other red flags that have a direct impact on children.

Using those standards, inspectors put together profiles of different centers, which are rated according to whether they're in "optimal," "moderate" or "low" compliance. Those in the latter category may get several unannounced visits.

If a center seems to have trouble complying, Sutton will put the director on notice that the center is headed for a "downgrade" of its license.

While many of Pennsylvania's day care operators feel that inspectors overemphasize minor infractions, they do get a break in one area — their licensing renewal visits.

Those inspections, which occur once a year, are scheduled in advance, giving providers time to get ready by cleaning up problems — or sweeping them under the rug.

With such notice, it's hard to catch many centers violating rules like staff ratios, let alone such serious abuses as hitting or humiliating a child, officials admit.

Unannounced visits represent only about 20 percent of all inspections in Western Pennsylvania, and even less in other parts of the state.

One reason: there are just 41 day care center inspectors in Pennsylvania overseeing nearly 4,000 centers — which means they can spend about three days on each center annually. So any extra, unannounced visits just add to an immense workload.

Solutions

After last summer's deaths, legislators rushed to reform the day care system.

Republicans and Democrats offered competing day care bills that would have speeded up the appeals process, made it easier for the state to close centers, and would have required unannounced inspections at all centers.

Some of that legislation passed the House and is in the Senate, but action is being put off until the Ridge administration can weigh in with its own proposal: an ambitious project to completely overhaul the regulation of its human services agencies, from day care to nursing homes.

"We decided the entire system needed a bottoms-up overhaul," said Feather O. Houston, welfare department secretary, who acknowledged that the state's current day care enforcement procedures are "very clumsy."

But some legislative staffers who monitor child care issues caution that the administration's proposal, though well-intentioned, may be too much for legislators to swallow this year.

"It's like Hillary Clinton's health care reform bill," said one staffer. "It's a phenomenal undertaking, a whole mishmash of issues."

Under the administration's proposal, which still hasn't been submitted as legislation, day care inspectors would get some important tools they don't have now.

They would have the power to impose fines — up to \$1,000 per violation, depending on the severity. The plan also would revamp the inspection process by creating a short list of 13 important "indicators" of compliance, like staff ratios or proper group size. If a center met those, it wouldn't have to go through the full

review of 200-plus regulations.

That would give inspectors more time to observe a center's programming and talk to operators about quality issues, said Rick Fiene, a nationally recognized expert on day care regulation, who developed the list.

But the proposal doesn't call for a 100-percent unannounced inspections policy, something that 13 percent of all other states do.

That omission has angered some lawmakers in the House, which voted overwhelmingly last year for an estimated \$1.4 million program to mandate inspections without prior notice.

Fiene argues that surprise visits are better targeted at low-compliance centers.

But Robert Godshall, a Republican legislator from Montgomery County and sponsor of the bill to require unannounced inspections, disagrees.

"If you know the inspector could show up any time, that'll keep you on your toes," said Godshall, a former turkey farmer. "If it's good enough for agricultural operations, it's good enough for our kids."

But Godshall's bill is being held up in the Senate committee chaired by David Heckler, a Republican from neighboring Bucks County, until the Ridge administration has a chance to make its case.

Still, it's unlikely that action on such a massive undertaking will be considered until after the November election, Heckler said.

In the meantime, the state seems to be taking a step backward in one area — training programs for day care workers.

Under Ridge's proposed 1996-97 budget, the \$3 million program would be cut by 13 percent.

And while the state may improve its inspection procedures, Heckler said that when it comes to actually upgrading the quality of day care centers, the state is unlikely to get involved.

"Pennsylvania is a very traditional state, very 'caveat emptor,' if you know what I mean," Heckler said.

"The mentality is buyer beware, and folks are going to have to make their own choices about what kind of care they seek for their children. If there's a sense of urgency for reform in the area of quality, it hasn't been communicated to me."



Snack time is a time to give thanks at the Wee Wisdom Play School and Day Care in Bellefonte, Centre County. Above, Caitlin Crable and her teddy bear say a prayer before eating, while Nell Griffin prays by covering her eyes. Wee Wisdom is one of hundreds of church-affiliated day care centers that have avoided regulation by the state. The state is supposed to inspect church-run centers but has not pressed the issue with those that have objections.

Answering to a higher regulator

State takes hands-off approach toward church-run day care centers

All day care centers in Pennsylvania must be inspected and licensed, according to the state law.

No ifs, ands, or buts.

Yet hundreds of church-run centers are operating without a license — and welfare officials look the other way.

Over the years, several church centers have denied access to state inspectors, citing constitutional issues of church-state separation. Some evangelical churches also believe in corporal punishment, which is banned by state day care regulations.

Does this mean that these unlicensed centers are poor quality centers? No — but regulation proponents argue that there is no way to know for sure without routine inspections.

In Centre County, Wee Wisdom Play School and Day Care has

story by mackenzie carpenter



photographs by robin rombach

been operating without a license for 20 years.

A state inspector paid the center a brief visit about 10 years ago, followed by a letter ordering it to “cease and desist” operation. But the center hired a lawyer, and the welfare department has not been heard from since, said Robert Baylor, the center’s director.

“Once you stand up to these people, they back off,” Baylor said.

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Lore Weldon, a teacher at Wee Wisdom, hugs one of her 2-year-old students, Nell Griffin, during playtime at the school. Weldon describes her job as just being "mom" to the kids while they're in her care.



Children at Wee Wisdom play on the porch of their building on a rainy afternoon. The center is a ministry of Centre County Christian Academy.

A few years ago, welfare officials did forward a case to state Attorney General Ernie Preate's office to be prosecuted. The case, *State vs. Trinity New Testament Day Care*, involved an unlicensed church facility in Philadelphia where there had been a fire. Preate's office never took any action.

Why such a hands-off policy by the state?

Howard Ulan, senior assistant counsel to the welfare department, said that "at some point, and I don't remember what point, I became aware that the policy had been as a general rule not to take on the religious-affiliated day care centers."

Why?

"I don't know," he said.

The department isn't even sure how many unlicensed church day care centers exist, because it stopped keeping track several years ago. A list provided by the department contained 14 centers' names, but there are many more than that.

Howard Fetterhoff, the former executive director of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, said during an interview last month that "a majority" of about 300 Catholic day care centers have refused to be licensed. Fetterhoff died last week after open heart surgery.

In the Pittsburgh Diocese, about one third of all the preschool and full-day programs affiliated with the church are licensed day care facilities. The rest are either licensed as nursery schools or not at all, said the Rev. Ronald Lengwin, diocese spokesman.

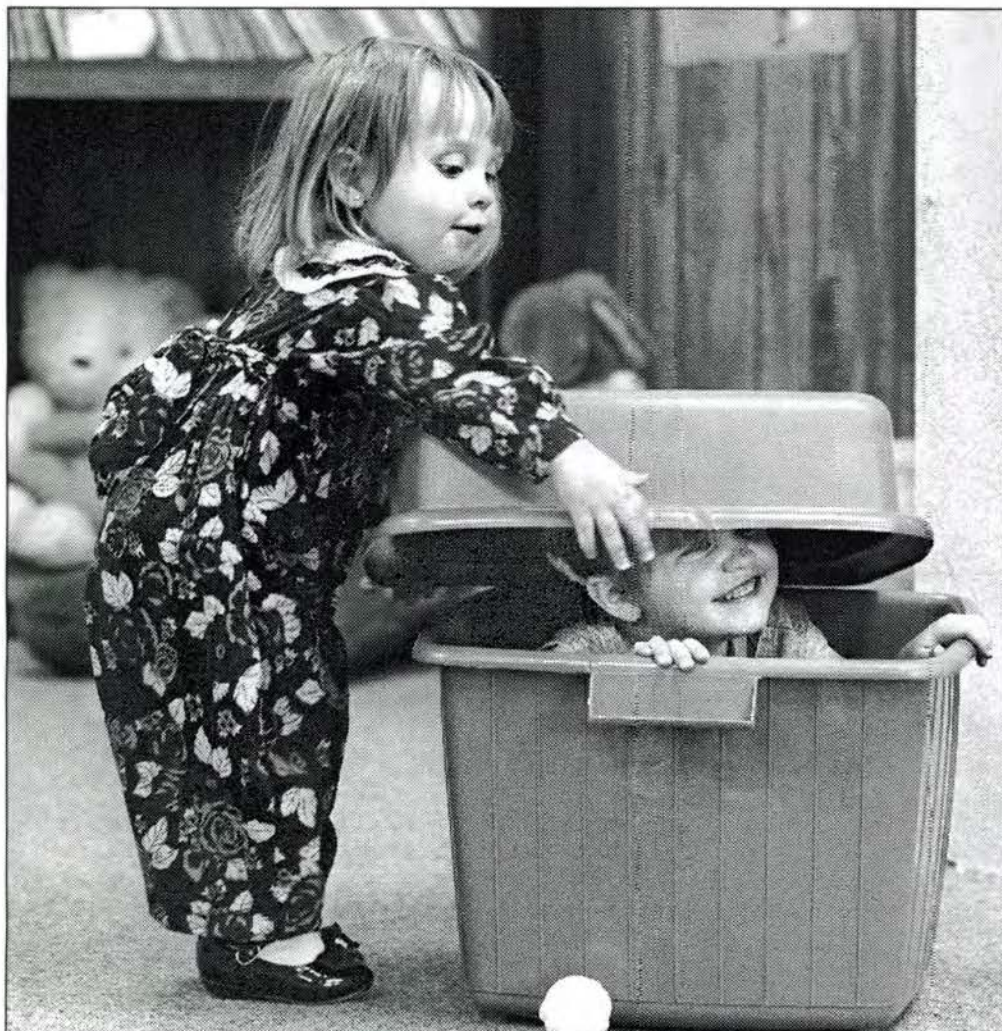
There are at least two dozen evangelical churches in Pennsylvania not on the state list that also are operating centers without a license, said Theodore Clayter, director of the Keystone Christian Education Association in Harrisburg.

Two local Presbyterian church centers have chosen to be unlicensed — a program at Glenshaw Presbyterian Church and one at The Presbyterian Church in Coraopolis. Many

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Playtime at Wee Wisdom: Above, Carly Homan, 2, puts the lid over Rebekah Gentzel's head as the two find their toy container more entertaining than the toys. At right, Carly gets some one-on-one attention from Becky Heckathorne, a student from Bob Jones University in South Carolina, who will spend the summer working at the center.



other local Presbyterian churches with day care programs have permitted state inspections, and Shadyside Presbyterian has taken the extra step of being accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Child care advocates in Harrisburg say that while welfare officials have wanted to inspect church-run centers, they have been afraid it might cause a backlash by powerful religious organizations, which might lead to legislation exempting the religious facilities.

That almost happened in 1991.

When child care reform legislation was brought up in the House of Representatives that May, religious groups — led by the Catholic Conference and the Keystone Association — successfully amended it to exempt their centers.

The bill later stalled in the Senate.

If Pennsylvania ever were to pass an exemption for religious day care, it would be in the minority. Only one out of three states excuse such facilities from licensing. Higher courts have ruled that states can decide either to exempt religious centers from regulation or hold them to the same standards as everyone else.

Efforts by the Ridge administration to negotiate a compromise with church groups earlier this spring failed. State officials now say they plan to proceed with inspections of those centers, even if that leads to a court battle.

While the Catholic Conference would have no problem allowing its facilities to be inspected for fire protection and safety, Fetterhoff said last month that state day care regulations go too far in their program and staff qualification requirements.

Evangelical churches are also unhappy about the regulations' ban on physical punishment.

While corporal punishment is rarely used on toddlers at Wee Wisdom, it is an option Baylor believes should remain available.

"I'm not talking about beating," Baylor said. "A swat on the bottom to any 2-year-old would get their attention."

"It has to be used sparingly, and the student has to know that what you're doing is being done in love, for correction. That's the whole key to good discipline."

But what about all the admonitions against corporal punishment by child development experts?

"We don't feel too kindly towards Dr. Spock here," Baylor said. "He's too permissive. He and the others all assume that these children are little adults. But the Bible says a child left to himself will lead his mother to shame."

Licensing doesn't mean quality

*Cleanliness, safety
are critical issues*

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

No day care center has ever been shut down in Pennsylvania — or anywhere else — for failing to provide “good” or “excellent” care.

No provider has ever been fined for not relating warmly enough to children, or for not doing enough to help a child learn how to think and how to make friends and feel good about himself.

That is not what most state inspectors in the United States evaluate.

Instead, they focus on the tangibles of safety and cleanliness. They worry about sharp corners on heating units and whether fire drills were conducted in the past 60 days. They worry about the things they can count, rather than the things they can't.

But some child care advocates would like to change that.

At a seminar last fall of day care providers and regulators in Washington, D.C., researchers at Yale University floated the idea of licensing through two “tracks” — one that would inspect centers for fire protection, safety and health, and another that would analyze the quality of a center by looking at its programs, how employees and children interact, and how well children are developing.

The quality inspections, the Yale researchers suggested, could even be made by private child development experts working under contract with the states.

At least one day care regulation expert, however, thinks that would be a horrible idea.

Gwen Morgan, a Wheelock College

professor in Boston, said if private contractors make licensing judgments, they could be sued by day care operators.

More importantly, she said licensing needs to concentrate on maintaining health and safety standards and keeping children safe. Too much emphasis on issues like programs and the relationships of caregivers and children could detract from the fundamental task of ensuring a secure environment for children.

“It's unrealistic for the early childhood field to think that licensing itself can take them to excellence,” she said.

That can only happen with voluntary accrediting associations to rate the quality of day care programs and staff, training programs to upgrade employees' skills, and resource and referral agencies to route parents to the best centers.

Despite her strong emphasis on health and safety, though, Morgan noted that regulators have added one ingredient to the list of what comprises good licensing — preventing “developmental impairment” of children.

The way inspectors can do that, she said, is by ensuring that centers don't exceed maximum ratios of employees to children, maintain group size limits for children of different ages and have staff who meet minimum training requirements.

Others, however, feel there could be improvements to licensing that would fall somewhere in between the present inspection methods and voluntary accreditation programs.

State Sen. Allison Schwartz, D-Philadelphia, has proposed that the Department of Public Welfare pay a team of early childhood professionals to help day care centers improve quality.

The experts wouldn't have legal responsibility for any licensing, but could help state inspectors focus on the quality of programs at individual centers.

Her bill — which carries a \$1 million price tag — has not yet been scheduled for consideration.

Another approach, said Yale University researcher Nancy Cohen, would be to license the people who operate child care facilities, as well as the buildings themselves.

That might be a quicker route to quality, she suggested.

“Why can't we ensure that the people caring for children have a license,” she asked, “just like nurses, teachers, and people who cut your hair?”

State slow to act on reports of abuse

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Anationwide wave of child abuse allegations at day care centers in the 1980s led to tougher screening requirements for employees and other reforms.

But in Pennsylvania, those changes have created a paradox.

On the one hand, many day care workers have lost their jobs, at least temporarily, because of state police delays in processing child abuse background checks.

But if the state finds enough evidence to indicate child abuse at a day care center, there is no requirement that the suspected abuser be removed from the facility.

And because of confidentiality concerns, parents whose children attend such centers are not told about the preliminary child abuse findings — only that the state is moving to revoke the center's license, which it almost always does when it believes abuse has occurred.

Under the current statute, background checks on employees are designed to make sure no center hires someone with a history of abusing children.

But there are two glitches in this process.

First, Pennsylvania doesn't check most day care employees — or anyone else who works with children — to see if they have child abuse convictions in other states. The law only requires out-of-state checks on people who are not legal Pennsylvania residents, usually those who have lived here less than a year.

Second, the state police have lagged behind in processing abuse clearances. And that's a problem, because under the law, day care staffers can only work for 30 days without such a clearance.

Sometimes, child care providers hold their breaths and hope state inspectors don't show up before the necessary clearances arrive. If

the inspectors do, the staffers in question must be fired — at least until their clearances come through.

At the moment, state police are on schedule in processing clearances, but at times during the past year, delays have been up to eight weeks.

And the backlog is about to get worse.

The state has only nine people to process about 356,000 background checks a year — which averages out to more than 100 checks per day for each employee. And that figure is expected to rise dramatically because of a new law requiring criminal background checks on every potential welfare recipient.

"That's going to bury us, because I have no people for that," said Cpt. Ernest Spittler, who oversees the process in the state police's Harrisburg headquarters.

Then there is the problem of what happens at centers where child abuse may have occurred.

If the state believes child abuse has taken place, based either on medical evidence or an admission by the perpetrator, it refers the case to police, and moves to revoke a center's license.

Currently, the state is seeking license revocations of two day care centers and four family day care homes for child abuse. All are open for business while they appeal. A third day care center is closed, but is pursuing its appeal nonetheless.

In both of the operating day care centers, the accused perpetrator is still working there. And in one family day care home, the state said the accused person is currently caring for three children.

But because the state won't identify the centers, no one can be sure where they are.

And while the revocation order makes its way through the appeals process, the law does not give the state the power to remove the accused employee from the facility or ensure that he or she has no contact with children.

The state can urge the center to fire the staffer, and officials say that usually happens. In cases of sexual abuse or extreme violence, the state says it shuts down the center altogether, citing it as an imminent danger to children.

But in cases involving "lesser" abuse — slapping a child, for example — accused workers have been allowed to remain during the lengthy appeals process.

"The perpetrator may still be there, but is probably not in direct child supervision," said Jennifer Lau, a lawyer with the Department of Public Welfare, which oversees day care. But "we don't have the authority to say the perpetrator shouldn't be with children."

The Ridge administration is drafting legislation that would bolster its power to remove day care employees, but has no plans to require centers accused of child abuse to be identified.

Are inspectors day care police?

*Providers and regulators
frequently square off over rules*

By Mackenzie Carpenter
and Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writers

Marianne Keefer is, in her own words, "the mouth from the South Hills."

Feisty and outspoken, Keefer, owner of a day care center in Washington County for 11 years, has a tough time keeping silent when the state inspector comes to call.

"I should just shut up and let them check the things off," but she doesn't, because she's often infuriated by what she sees as the inspectors' overly literal attention to the rules.

There was the time, for example, when Keefer stepped out of the infants' room in the presence of an inspector to pick up a portable telephone ringing in the hallway. She kept the phone there so the children wouldn't wake up during their naps.

During the seven seconds she was gone, the inspector cited her for violating child supervision requirements.

"These things do nothing to build on a positive relationship with the state. They're just punishment," she said.

"They're mostly concerned about what's in the files and the temperature of the refrigerator," added Margot Plant, director of the Northmont Child Development Center in the North Hills. "Child development is an area that they don't touch."

The inspectors' attitude is, "You did five things wrong, that goes on your report," said Susie Ross Macik, director of the Western Area Vo-Tech School's child development center in Canonsburg. "What about the five things we did right? Is that on our report? No."

All of this points to a communications gap between inspectors and day care providers, especially in the Pitts-

burgh region, where Director Louise Sutton is known as a stickler for compliance.

Many child care advocates say the tension between inspectors and day care operators is actually a good thing, because it shows Sutton's passionate commitment to children's safety.

But the by-the-book approach has bred deep resentment among some providers, both small-time "mom and pops" and prestigious, nationally accredited centers.

Inspectors here "are the day care police," said one director of a respected facility in Pittsburgh. "They come in just looking for things to cite us for."

Not everyone is resentful of the inspectors' zeal, and not every inspection is a battle.

Personalities of inspectors and operators are an obvious factor in how smoothly the visits go. Good will between the two is easier in centers that are perceived as being "with the program" — those whose directors have bought into the necessity of compliance, even when the rules don't seem to serve much purpose, many day care directors say.

A hand-picked inspector

The Post-Gazette asked to interview several inspectors who had been the target of operators' complaints and to accompany them on inspections — but Sutton declined the request.

The only inspector made available for an interview was Robert Kelley, on a visit to the Crafton Children's Center, a small infant-toddler program in Sheraden that is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

This inspection could have been used as a training film.

Everything Kelley checked was in

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Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

Marianne Keefer, above, has been outspoken in her criticism of the state's regulation of day care. Keefer, who runs a day care center in Washington County, says she has been cited for violations that can only be found in the most literal interpretation of the state's guidelines. That is a result of having a corps of state day care inspectors who are bureaucrats with no experience in child development, she says.

order, every practice he observed was appropriate. He even complimented a caregiver who was letting two toddlers squirt colored glue on their artwork.

But most centers aren't as well-run as Crafton, and not all inspectors are as genial as Kelley, who is known among providers as a nice guy who manages to do his job without antagonizing them.

Joan Benso, director of the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, a children's advocacy group based in Harrisburg, said a more typical scenario goes like this:

"You're not at [the required staff-child] ratio at 3 o'clock one day, because you exhausted your substitute list, and your 3-year-olds' teacher is a single mom of a second-grader who threw up and she had to go get him."

If those kind of circumstances are carefully explained to an inspector, Benso believes, the provider shouldn't be cited for violating the ratio, "but that takes a level of understanding and partnership between the [welfare] department and the provider that doesn't exist today in Pennsylvania."

Sutton rejected Benso's argument.

"I should not cite them? I have to cite them. It's a regulation that protects kids. If you got into playing those games with 40-some inspectors, where everyone has an excuse for every ratio violation, then we're really in trouble," she said.

One reason for the continuing tensions is that most of the state's day care inspectors have less training and experience in child care than the people they regulate.

Currently, 41 inspectors regulate day care centers, while five inspectors randomly check registered family day care homes. The number of inspectors is down from a high of 49 in 1994 — even though the number of centers in the state has been increasing about 5 percent a year, according to industry analysts.

A dozen more people work as supervisors and directors in the state's four regional day care licensing offices.

Of those 58 people, only nine have early childhood development degrees and have worked in day care facilities. Thirteen others have had experience

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working in day care centers. That means more than half the inspectors have no background in the field.

Are standards too low?

In Pennsylvania, inspectors must be civil service employees who have a bachelor's degree in social sciences, "plus two years of professional experience in a public or private human services agency working in a program serving the needs of children, youth and families, or any equivalent combination of experience and training."

In Michigan, by contrast, inspectors must have master's degrees in child development. In Vermont and Minnesota, all inspectors must have worked in day care centers. And Texas requires newly hired inspectors without experience to work in a day care facility for a period of time first.

Many Pennsylvania day care inspectors are former case workers from state institutions such as Mayview State Hospital, a mental institution. Several worked in former detention facilities.

Three years ago, the Pennsylvania Association of Child Care Agencies, an industry group, recommended that inspectors either be required to have worked in child care, or have a degree in the field.

"The [welfare] department, and the Legislature, thought we were crazy," said Benso, the group's former director.

As far as inspectors' attitudes go, other states have tried to find ways to accentuate the positive during the regulatory process.

Florida just enacted a law allowing a "gold seal" to be affixed to centers in full compliance with the law.

In Vermont, inspectors write down suggestions for improvements on their reports. One inspector, for instance, wrote on a center's report that "instead of telling children it's not very nice, or you need to play nice, be sure to tell the children what 'nice' is and what appropriate behavior is." The Vermont inspectors write down praise for any behavior by the provider that they feel promotes quality.

But Pennsylvania's Sutton doesn't believe it's possible to use inspectors to enforce high-level quality standards, the kind set by national accrediting agencies.

"If we can't even get people to comply with health and safety regulations, how in God's name would the state ever implement that?" she said with exasperation.

Ted de Wolf, of Michigan's Bureau of Regulatory Services, disagrees. He thinks it's still possible for inspectors to police day care centers and help them achieve quality.

"It's like being a state trooper. If you break the law, he'll nail you; if you're in trouble, he'll help you."



Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

An exception to the negative characterization of day care inspectors is Robert Kelley, above inspecting the Chartiers Valley Primary Center. Kelley has a reputation for being genial and non-antagonistic, and happened to be the only inspector the Post-Gazette was allowed to follow on the job.

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Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

Day care for the poor is often provided in facilities with minimal means. At Ida Jones' Day Care Center in McKees Rocks, the director is working hard to improve. She shares a building with Tricie's Day Care, where the violations keep getting worse and worse. Above, twins Brandy and Bria make their way back to Ida Jones', which has doors on the right and left. The center door leads to Tricie's.

How do we rate?

There are more than 500 day care centers in the Pittsburgh region. The Post-Gazette examined the 1995 state inspection reports for every one of them. On this day, we'll look at what lay behind the paperwork, ranging from a center that had three years of perfect inspections to one with 12 pages of violations in a single visit. Every center, rich or poor, better or worse, had a story to tell. And each one was a window into the state of day care in the region.

The good: CMU center one of area's best

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Yang Scheng Xu, a robotics professor at Carnegie Mellon University, emerged from Marsha Poster's office a happy man. He had just enrolled his 3-year-old son in the Carnegie Mellon Child Care Center, the on-campus program that Poster has directed for 21 years.

"I've visited 15 centers," the father said. "This is the best."

And while "the best" is always a matter of opinion, it's safe to say that the CMU Child Care Center, with its mostly upscale, academic and international clientele, is near the pinnacle of what the region has to offer.

Parents call to be placed on the waiting list even before their babies are born, and each September's classes are booked solid by the preceding March. Much of this success is due to Poster, who somehow has managed to keep the program evolving on a flood plain.

Yes, flood plain.

For all its prestige, the center is located in a windowless basement that routinely floods — the last couple of times with sewage — and has to be closed for several days at a time while the carpets are steamed.

This dismal situation has been upsetting parents for years. One of them, philosophy professor Clark Glymour, wrote a letter to CMU President Robert Mehrabian last year calling the center's facilities "appalling" and pleading for relocation.

Last month, a solution was finally announced. The center will be moving one floor up, into what is now the cafeteria of the Morewood Gardens dormitory.

The university will spend up to \$1 million rebuilding the space, according to CMU Vice President Patrick Keating. Poster is hoping the new design will take some cues from the famed Reggio Emilia schools in Italy, which she has visited.

Keating said the new space probably won't be big enough to expand the program,



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Ariel Laifer, 5, listens to a story read by teacher David Robinson while sitting in a reflective triangle.

which enrolls 95 children ages 2½ through kindergarten (140 in the summer, when children up to age 8 attend).

That's a far cry from its humble beginnings in 1971, when the CMU Women's Collective convinced the university to begin a pilot program for 15 children.

Relocation will mean one thing above all to the director: "Daylight!"

Daylight is a big thing for Poster, who

rails against the basement status of child care across the nation.

A Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, Poster is a force of nature when it comes to child care advocacy. When she's not agitating for higher teaching salaries, she's pushing to reform day care regulations or chairing professional organizations.

In 1981, with CMU employees clamoring for

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Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette photos

Adopting techniques from the acclaimed Reggio Emilia schools in Italy, the child care center at Carnegie Mellon University encourages exploration. Above, Tanea Francis-Webb, 5, works with "crystal builders" on a light table.

good infant care, Poster joined forces with Natalie Kaplan of the Carriage House Children's Center to found the Infant and Toddler Center, now located in Carriage House's Squirrel Hill building.

And when the National Association for the Education of Young Children began accrediting centers 10 years ago, Poster joined Kaplan and two other directors to create the first group of accredited centers in the region. The others were Betty Lisowski of Point Park Children's School and Barbara Keiser of Riverview Children's Center.

So just how good is the program at CMU?

It hasn't escaped violations on its inspection reports. The 1995 record showed 14 minor citations, from a handwashing sign that fell down, to White Out in an unlocked closet and imperfect paperwork. Most were corrected immediately.

But CMU is a good example of what the

inspection reports don't indicate about a program's quality. Even a few hours of observation show the high level of creative engagement between children and teachers — qualities that aren't measured by state standards.

One recent morning, the 3-year-olds were tasting fruits and vegetables, discussing their reactions and charting their flavors and textures on a wall poster.

Some 4-year-olds were discovering the properties of clay. Others were using materials from the recycling bin to create models of the rides they had visited at the CMU spring carnival.

Meanwhile, the kindergarten children were choosing the best work from their portfolios for an end-of-year exhibit.

And a visitor was leafing through an album of the center's multi-cultural lunch program, where parents sent dishes and

recipes from a dozen nations and the children had their photos taken with their favorite foods.

CMU proves that good child care does not require a Taj Mahal setting — although, as some parents have pointed out, dry land is nice.

"There's never an attitude of 'We can't do this' here," said Sandy Johns, who has taught kindergarten at the center for 14 years. "It's always, 'Should we do it, and how, and when?'"

She points to the center's gradual adaptation of some of the Reggio Emilia approaches. After Poster visited there, she paid to send her entire teaching staff for a day of training at Reggio Emilia's sole American outpost, the Model Early Learning Center in Washington, D.C.

That demonstrates an advantage the CMU center has over many others: institu-

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tional support.

The university provides the center's space free and gives employees a 25-percent discount on tuition. For non-employees, the tuition is \$640 a month, one of the highest fees in Allegheny County. No subsidized children are accepted, a situation Poster calls "very unsettling," but unavoidable because the welfare department's reimbursement rates are too low.

University support allows the center to pay better wages, with starting salaries at \$16,500 to \$18,000 and full CMU benefits.

The highest ratio of children to adults is seven-to-one, much better than the state requires.

All the teachers have at least a four-year college degree in early childhood education or a related field; all receive training well beyond the annual six-hour minimum required by the state.

And every six years, when NAEYC holds its national convention in Washington, D.C., the center shuts down so that the entire staff can attend.

That's a rare perk in child care. But it's part of Poster's vow to keep the CMU center on the cutting edge of child care in the region.



Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

It's lunch time at Tricie's Day Care Center in McKees Rocks. The state is trying to close the center after a steady stream of worsening violations. But the owner, Rev. Larry Bailey, has vowed to keep his doors open.

The bad: Steady decline at Tricie's

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



ne brilliantly sunny day last month inside Tricie's Day Care in McKees Rocks, a group of preschoolers sat at a low table under fluorescent lights, playing aimlessly with some faded wooden puzzles.

A "Barney" tape was on full blast, as it would be all morning.

Next door, at Ida Jones' Day Care Center, 3-week-old "Chris" was curled in the fetal position in his crib, a tiny blot in a vast expanse of pastel crib sheeting. Chris' mother was in the hospital, recovering from a "nervous breakdown," said his caregiver, Laura Tracy.

This is day care's war zone.

This is where the poorest children must be cared for in the most inhospitable circumstances imagin-

able — except, in some cases, their own homes.

This is day care from providers who must struggle with their own lack of education in child development — or their staffers'. They're swamped with overdue bills and late reimbursements by state welfare officials. And they get little help from parents who are either too overwhelmed or disinterested to visit the centers in which their children spend up to 12 hours a day.

Tricie's Day Care and Ida Jones' Day Care sit side by side in a former hardware store on McKees Rocks' main street. They are among the most troubled centers in Western Pennsylvania.

Both ranked among the most frequent violators of state regulations in 1995. Both of them care primarily for welfare children whose mothers have gone back to school or who work in low-paying jobs. And they provide that care in a dingy building that defies the very meaning of "appropriate indoor play space" — the standard set by the state.

Yet the two centers are very different.

In fact, they illustrate what happens when two people, presented with the same population of children, the same facilities, the same obstacles that come with running a small business, either meet the challenge — or fail to.

Ida Jones, despite her problems with state inspectors who have cited her for incorrect paperwork or peeling paint or exposed bolts, rarely makes the same mistake twice. She is on a learning curve, state officials say, moving in the

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At Ida Jones' Day Care Center in McKees Rocks, violations of state regulations have been frequent. But rarely are the same mistakes made twice. Its owner, Ida Jones, is working with a limited budget to improve the quality of service and programs. At right, Hazel Mayo, an assistant at the center, tries to get a smile out of 1-year-old Jasmen.



Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

right direction toward full compliance.

But the Rev. Larry Bailey, owner of Tricie's Day Care, is headed in a different direction: straight down, although he's not going without a fight.

Since he opened for business in November 1992, Bailey has not only made the same mistakes repeatedly, he's made new ones, and worse ones. The downward spiral can be tracked in his inspection reports, which document everything from dirty diapers on a counter, to repeated staff-to-children ratio violations, to a fender-bender involving Bailey's van in which 10 children went to the emergency room. No one was injured, but the parents were never notified, the state contended.

In the earlier days, in the column marked "providers' plan of correction or response" on state inspection forms, Bailey would write, in careful script, "will correct." Then, as the problems worsened, defiance set in.

"THIS IS NOT TRUE/but I will address the staff on this matter," the responses read, over and over again.

Today, after 312 years of tension, three

provisional licenses and a racial harassment lawsuit that Bailey filed against state inspectors and later dropped, Tricie's Day Care has finally hit bottom.

On April 28, state welfare officials announced they were revoking its license. And while Bailey says he is appealing the order, all state subsidy money for low-income children has been terminated, and the center no longer has dozens of little kids trooping through the beat-up iron door that opens onto a garbage-strewn back alley.

Where are they going?

Some of them are next door, at "Miss Ida's."

Woman with a plan

Ida Jones is 52 years old. She has a certain don't-mess-with-me swagger about her; a mannerism learned, perhaps, from her days counseling drug and alcohol addicts, but also from her recent experience as a small businesswoman faced with people who don't pay their bills.

She got into day care several years ago, first as a staffer at Grandmom's House,

which closed last year after a child at its North Side facility was found locked in a car on a hot day.

Jones decided to start her own business, intrigued by its economic potential, but also, she added, because she cares about the problems faced by welfare mothers.

Jones' staffers pick the kids up first thing in the morning and take them home at night. Larry Bailey does that, too. Van service, in fact, is a big draw for welfare mothers without cars, making it easier for them to get up in the morning and catch the bus Downtown for school.

That's the point, Jones said. She wants to make it easier for these women to finish their education and get jobs.

"I have babies whose mothers are babies," she said. "They're still in high school, some of these girls."

Of course, because their children are picked up and deposited every day, many of these young women have no reason to visit the center, Jones said, but she is trying to fix that by setting up a mothers group.

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"We're going to have them tell us what they want, just like we can tell them what they need. But they're going to have to get their butts to the meeting."

Armed with a master's degree in social work from the University of Pittsburgh, Jones appears determined to teach herself and her employees how to do child care the right way.

"I stress to my staff that this is not baby-sitting," she said. "I tell them this is a professional job, a professional business."

But it can be rough going.

On a visit last July, an inspector cited Jones for a litany of paperwork problems: no non-family references for this staffer, no current health appraisals for that staffer, no results of a tuberculosis screening, no child abuse clearances on file.

So, on that day, Jones had to fire four employees.

Some of it was her fault, she admitted, but some of it wasn't. The child abuse clearances hadn't come in because the state police were running months late in processing them.

"We haven't made any of the same mistakes again," she said. "We still make mistakes, but they're different ones, part of the learning process."

Louise Sutton, who heads this region's day care licensing office, agrees. "She's where she should be," Sutton said.

Side by Side

Once, Jones and Tricie's owner, Bailey, worked together in the center that Jones now owns, but they had a falling out, and today, they don't speak.

Like an estranged couple reluctantly sharing the same house until the divorce comes through, these two centers coexist in the same building, with Tricie's jammed between Ida Jones' two facilities — one for infants and toddlers, the other for school-age children.

It is a bizarre building for a day care center.

Its main rooms are long and narrow, without windows, except for the front ones facing the street, and they are almost completely covered up. Jones has transformed an alley into a neat little playground, and has installed "classrooms" for the older children in that part of her center.

But both her center and Bailey's lack the cozy, cluttered feeling found in many other facilities. There's a simple reason for it: there aren't many toys, although there are palpably fewer at Tricie's than at Jones'.

"Not enough books," wrote an inspector in November 1992 about Tricie's facility. "Not enough puzzles," another report stated on May 24, 1993. And on April 18 of this year, another inspector wrote, "same plan of daily

activities and programming has been posted for months and is the same for all groups from infant through preschool."

That was 10 days before the final "cease-and-desist" letter arrived, ordering Tricie's to close.

Some children still come to Tricie's every day, although it's not clear just how Bailey will ever be reimbursed for their care. Still, the center will stay open, Bailey has vowed, "until the bitter end — if that is what God wants me to do."

Bailey has been on the brink before. In October 1995, the state refused to renew his license, and when he appealed, the state agreed, on Jan. 15, to grant him a provisional license.

But to get it, Bailey had to promise, among other things, to drop his racial harassment lawsuit; find a qualified director; "improve and optimize the quality of the day-to-day activities and programming offered to the children in care"; and ensure that, when transporting children to and from the facility, "the maximum amount of continuous time in the vehicle for any distinct one-way trip will be approximately 30 minutes."

He didn't meet those conditions, and the ax fell three months later.

Why is it still open?

The question is, why now, and not earlier?

Why wasn't Tricie's shut down that day in May 1993, when an inspector noted on his report that "a toddler wandered around the room crying and no one attended to his needs. This lasted for 30 minutes"?

Why wasn't it shut down on April 18, 1996, when the fire marshal, two inspectors and a licensing administrator descended on the facility after discovering that the center's front door hadn't been working for some time because of a key broken in the lock?

Or on March 20, when Bailey dropped a 3-year-old off in the custody of her 9-year-old sibling, who was playing outdoors about a half-mile from their home?

Should it have been closed down on those occasions? Or was the state right to try to work with Bailey, to urge him, nag him, prod him into compliance, so that more poor children could get the care they needed?

State officials, citing ongoing litigation, won't comment on that.

But one answer to those questions might be found in Tricie Bailey, Rev. Bailey's wife and the source of the center's name. A tired-looking woman with a sweet, worried face, she oversees staffers Rosa Faucet and Tiffany Eberhart.

None of these women are abusive or petty. They struggle with the same obstacles faced by many providers in low-income areas: lack of education, lack of money, lack of support.

Also, the state rarely shuts down a center quickly unless it feels the children are in "imminent danger."

It would have been hard to make a case for that at Tricie's last week.

"Honey, you want to help me pass out the ice pops?" Tricie Bailey said to Destyne, a 4-year-old who was crouched against a wall on the floor, weeping. "She's tired," Tricie Bailey said of the little girl. "She misses her mother. Dezzie is with us from 6:30 in the morning to 6:30 at night."

Still, such acts of kindness are unevenly distributed at Tricie's, depending on how busy the staff is.

In the "rough toddler" area, Andrew, 5, leaned against a divider, sobbing. He was in "time out," for playing too hard with the other children. The staffers, preoccupied with other children, ignored him.

In the preschooler area, six children knocked about. Despite the absence of toys or work materials, they were in the midst of vivid pretend play, "going to work" at McDonald's.

But then, there was a scuffle, and one of the older boys, Chris, socked another child hard in the face, and the victim screamed in pain and clutched his cheek.

"Don't do that," staffer Rosa Faucet said calmly to Chris.

While none of the children appeared to be in any immediate danger, their environment was not comfortable or stimulating. Many of the children seemed bored and aimless, separated into play areas by scratchy particle-board dividers painted bright yellow and orange and locked shut. The brown-striped carpet was dirty, fastened to the floor with black tape. The thick, sweet smell of insecticide filled the air.

Bailey contends programming and physical problems are not the reasons why the state wants to shut down Tricie's Day Care. His troubles stem from racism and personal animosity, he believes.

"This is a personal vendetta against me, a war between certain individuals and me" — namely Louise Sutton and her inspectors, he said.

"I'm not perfect, but I don't deserve this. I have been through so much in my life, overcome so much. And my wife, all she wanted was to run a nice little day care center, and take care of kids," he said, sitting at a desk in the infant area and gazing at the blue book of day care rules that had given him so much trouble.

"This," he said, nodding at the book, "is just a personal tool they use for their own advantageous gain."

So, with his state subsidies cut off and a license revocation hanging over his head, how will he make it through?

"Oh, private money, friends, God," he said.

Sweating details meant perfect score at Color Me Happy

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



he odds of making it through an annual day care inspection without being cited are pretty slender.

But that's what happened three years in a row for Color Me Happy, an unprepossessing little day care center on Babcock Boulevard in the North Hills.

In 1993, 1994 and 1995, it got through its inspections with nary a violation.

How did Dana Anderson, the center's owner, do it?

"I'm obsessive-compulsive," she said, and she did not sound like she was joking.

"I think the biggest thing is being careful about your paperwork," said Anderson, who has a master's degree in business. She keeps a checklist for every staffer she hires, to ensure they have all the proper paperwork. If they don't, they're laid off.

"I've developed quite an extensive filing system. What else can you do?" she shrugs.

It's not all about paperwork, though.

Color Me Happy enjoys a good reputation among parents and other providers in the North Hills region. It's a small place, but immaculate. And with eight staffers for a maximum of 38 children, the center is well above the state's minimum adult-child ratio requirements — a key indicator of quality.

On one recent morning, preschoolers were playing "garage sale." With five dollars' worth of play money in hand, they were "buying" items in the room.

"We're learning about numbers and the

worth of things," said director Wendy Stanton, who has a bachelor's degree in elementary education.

Despite Color Me Happy's sterling inspection record, Stanton's type of college degree would mean that the facility could not get accreditation right now from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, or NAEYC.

NAEYC's voluntary standards require that directors have schooling in child development or early childhood education — different fields than elementary education.

But director Anderson doesn't appear particularly interested in pursuing accreditation just yet.

"I haven't had time," she said. "I might get to it one day."

Her staff, she points out, is reasonably well-paid and stable, even if it lacks some of the educational qualifications required by NAEYC.

And that lack of credentials doesn't bother Gina Leone, a staffer who works in the center's infant room. "All the education in the world isn't going to teach you patience when it comes to dealing with a baby that may be crying all day," she said, her eyes never leaving a baby who was crawling towards a pacifier.

Without missing a beat, Gina snatched it out of the way just in time to make sure it was his before popping it into his mouth.

"I have girls with very little formal education who do a good job caring for kids," added Stanton. "We've had people with glowing resumes who just didn't click." One woman with a master's degree in child development

"just sat and watched," she recalled.

At this point, Anderson has only one tiny cloud hanging above her.

Early in 1996, a new state inspector visited Anderson's facility, and lo, it was cited — for two violations.

They weren't major, but Anderson was furious, since the inspector was new, and one of the violations was for exposed bolts on an outdoor fence — the same bolts a previous inspector had OK'd as being high enough off the ground not to pose a threat.

It's not as though Anderson was cited for having rats in the basement or for putting 32 kids in a space licensed for 16. But that violation, plus another for some missing paperwork that was located just minutes after the inspector left, rankled Anderson.

"It just wasn't fair. The bolts weren't a problem before, but then we get an inspector who changes the rules in the middle of the game," Anderson said.

Louise Sutton, director of the region's day care licensing office, was unmoved.

"If we didn't cite the bolts in a prior inspection, we should have," she said flatly.

Still, with only two minor violations this year on top of a spotless three-year record of no violations, isn't Anderson, a self-described perfectionist, overreacting just a bit?

"No," she shot back. "I work too hard to make sure everything's right to have to go through this. Besides, parents come in, see the violations, and that's a blot on your record. They don't know the story behind the violations."



Marsha Walters, director of Hilltop Community Childrens' Center in Knoxville, has a close encounter with one of the children at the center. Walters' center was praised as one of Pittsburgh's top 10 by a licensing inspector.

Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

The will to succeed

It would have been easy to quit, but Hilltop's operator focused on excellence

by mackenzie carpenter

Marsha Walters, in the words of her license plate, is **AMAZED:**

- That at age 41, she, a former single mother on welfare, is successfully running a day care center in a poor neighborhood.

- That her center was called one of the 10 best in the city by a state licensing inspector.

- That she now is in the business of providing a safe and nurturing environment for troubled kids, considering that her own family once landed on the front page of the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph after her father held them hostage at gunpoint.

Most of all, though, "I'm amazed every morning I wake up, that I'm still here, frankly," she said.

Walters, executive director of Hilltop Community Children's Center in Knoxville, is living proof that when it comes to providing high quality child care on a bare-bones budget, it can be done.

"Marsha Walters decided a long time ago that this was what she wanted to do with her life, and in order to do it, she had to better herself," said Steve Woods, who runs a mentoring program for child care providers at Louise Child Care. "She trained and prepared herself professionally. She has the energy and will to succeed. Not everyone has that. But she does."

Consider Walters' staff-child ratios. Not content with the

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state's minimum requirement of one caregiver for four infants, Walters has gone one better: a staffer for every three babies, a ratio she believes is much better for children.

It's a costly decision, one that other providers often reject, claiming they can't afford to hire the extra staff. But she manages to find a way. How?

"You beg, borrow and steal," she said. "Well, not *steal*," she laughed, sitting in a tiny office whose yellow walls are papered with religious postcards of the Madonna and Child — "moms and kids," she said.

Lanky, apple-cheeked, Walters is very clever about persuading people to help her succeed, whether they are big corporations or janitors or child care teachers. The center is licensed for 60 children, from 6 weeks to 13 years of age, and has an annual budget of \$200,000, much of which comes from donations.

Hired in 1988 by St. Canice Church to run a child care center in a former convent at Knox and Orchard Avenues, she took over the center last year when the Pittsburgh Diocese decided to get out of the business.

Life as an independent, nonprofit center has had its down side. Several times she has skirted dangerously close to not paying employees when the state lagged in reimbursing her for welfare clients.

She can no longer offer staffers the diocese's lower rates for health insurance and pension benefits, and she lost seven years of pension contributions for herself.

"I was a little scared at first when the diocese dropped us," she said. But in a sense, it was liberating. Foundations and charities that wouldn't contribute to a church-affiliated center were suddenly receptive to her appeals.

The Sewickley Child Health Association donated \$4,000 for an infant room. The Mellon Trust donated computers for her after-school program. A local company donated the industrial carpet, which she put down herself. Duquesne University law students painted the walls.

Walters cut corners by eliminating a \$20,000-a-year position of administrative assistant, which means she does much of the paperwork herself.

She pays her staff less than she'd like — "the ones who've been here five or six years get \$7 an hour, big whoop," she said dolefully — but she does pay them benefits, and that helps her keep good people.

So committed is she to keeping loyal, long-term staffers that she decided regretfully not to pursue accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Complying with NAEYC's rigorous standards would have meant dismissing two longtime staffers who don't have degrees in child de-

velopment and who didn't want to go back to school.

"I wouldn't trade them for the world," she said.

With more than 60 percent of her children on some kind of subsidy, and with private fees lower than most — \$440 a month for infants, for example, including meals — Walters has a tough time balancing her budget. Many of her disputes are with welfare caseworkers, who she said chronically lose paperwork, claim it was the parents' fault and then don't reimburse her.

Walters knows about being poor, and all the problems that come with it.

Her family had little money. Her father, after the hostage incident, spent most of the rest of his life in jail, and died there. An older sister committed suicide. Walters' first husband, whom she married at age 15, abused her. She has been on welfare. She has been through two divorces.

What eventually turned her life around was going back to school and immersing herself in learning about the education and care of young children.

Today, she constantly strives to improve herself. She participated in Louise Child Care's mentoring program so she could learn better staff training techniques, and now her own program is cited by the mentors as an example.

Life isn't perfect. She'd like to tear down an abandoned building to expand her outdoor playground. Last year a gang member, apparently as a prank, nearly ran his car over one of her after-school children playing in a parking lot across from the center, but "I didn't report it because they would have torched the place," she said.

Plus, she has some competition. The opening of another day care center on a main thoroughfare near hers cut her enrollment enough to worry her, although she's seen a recent resurgence.

Why did people choose the other center over hers?

"It was cheaper, and more convenient, right on the car line," she said. "Don't kid yourself. Parents care about convenience first. They don't care about quality."

But if Marsha Walters has anything to say about it, the parents at her center will learn to care. A room upstairs is set aside for regular parent education meetings, and parents whose children use the center are required to attend.

"My goal in life is to teach parents to stop hurting their children. Parents — and caregivers — need to stop smacking and spanking and hurting their children in the name of discipline," she said. "That terrible childhood, the one I had to overcome — people shouldn't have to live like that."

Her center, she said, is a quality place "even though it's a little rougher around the edges than most. But someone once compared this place to that book, 'The Velveteen Rabbit.' You know, it's worn, but it comes with lots of love."

North Side YMCA's day care gets up from canvas

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

The day care center at the Allegheny YMCA on the North Side came within a hair of losing its license this year.

No children were hurt, lost or left in vans. But the program piled up such an avalanche of violations that the state moved to close it in January.

The center, on the second floor of the Y building on North Avenue, is one of 33 child care programs the YMCA runs in Allegheny County. Only four are for young children; the rest are after-school or summer care. All come under the umbrella of the YMCA of Pittsburgh, headquartered Downtown.

With an organization that size — and one that counts children as a top priority — it might seem that there would be enough resources to rescue a program in distress.

But that didn't happen in this case until after the state issued the order to cease and desist, at which point the center had been floundering for seven months.

Today the Allegheny program is back in good standing, with a new day care director and a new license to care for its 39 preschoolers. And the YMCA has a new system for overseeing all its child care programs, a direct outgrowth of the near-disaster on the North Side.

Still, the Allegheny story serves as a warning of how quickly even a well-established program can fall apart. In this case, as in most others of its nature, the breakdown was caused by day care's most intractable shortages — money and qualified staff.

The center had gone through five directors in six years, mostly because the low salaries drove them all to leave. But even with that instability, there was no major crisis until last summer.

Just as the summer camp program was gearing up to handle 45 school-age children, the two camp coordinators quit to take higher paying jobs.

Their departures left a roster of untrained counselors behind, and forced the Y to bring all the summer camp children into

the North Avenue building.

"We couldn't leave all those kids with nowhere to go," said Tim Decker, executive director of the Allegheny branch. "We felt a responsibility to the community."

That decision, however, left the director of the child care center in charge of summer campers who were never supposed to be her responsibility.

Suddenly the Y was in regulatory free fall.

"It was the summer from hell," said Decker. "Our director was stretched way too thin."

The inspection reports from June 1995 tell the tale — 12 pages of violations, 43 in all, everything from unqualified staff, too many children in a room and too few caregivers per group to dirty rooms, harsh and demeaning language toward children (the caregiver in question was fired), kids eating and sleeping on the floor, and staffers lacking required references, criminal background checks, child abuse clearances, and water safety training.

For sheer volume, there wasn't another inspection report that rivaled the Allegheny Y in the six-county region.

Two months later, on Aug. 4, things seemed to be back on track. An unannounced inspection showed only four violations. But then, two weeks later, another inspection produced five pages of violations, including more staff shortages and an adult restraining a child and shouting.

And on Dec. 4, long after the summer program had ended, another unannounced visit brought four more pages of write-ups.

Many of them, Decker acknowledged, were real problems. But he also believes that inspectors were cracking down especially hard because two children in Pennsylvania had died in day care that year.

Some violations seemed manufactured — like when the center was cited for using "non-prescription medicine" — sunscreen that hadn't been approved by a child's parents.

Furthermore, Decker said, there's only so much that can be done with an 80-year-old building. Old wainscoting that buckled repeatedly during changes in the weather meant constant citations for peeling paint,

for example.

Even though there had been three negative reports, the state's move in January to revoke the center's license was unusually quick.

Some centers get three provisional licenses — issued as warnings to fix what's wrong — before anything so dire takes place. The Allegheny Y had only one provisional license when the state lowered the boom.

Louise Sutton, director of the Department of Welfare's day care division for the western region, said no single thing triggered the legal action. "They just fell so far so fast. The repeatedness of the violations was a big factor. No one was on top of the situation."

Julius Jones, executive director of the Pittsburgh YMCA, said Decker was telling him the problems cited by the state were being corrected, but then the inspector would show up and report otherwise.

"So who's right?" Jones asked. "A branch executive has no reason to be anything but straight with me when his career depends on my faith in him. Yet the inspector is telling me the opposite. We have good relations with the Department of Welfare, but this was frustrating for everyone."

Two things since then seem to have reversed the decline at North Avenue: Decker hired Jackie Taylor, an experienced day care director, to run the program; and Jones assigned Bill Pricener, a Y child care administrator, to be the center's permanent trouble-shooter.

These actions also coincided with the assignment of a new state inspector to the center.

Within six weeks, the downward slide was halted and the state inspection reports vastly improved. On May 9, the state reinstated the center's license.

The "summer from hell" is over, but Jones said the systemic changes are here to stay.

"When North Avenue blew up in our faces, we realized we had to use our child care administrators more effectively." The administrators, he said, "will now be visiting all our programs and doing their own inspections on a regular basis."

Inspection records: They show deficits, not pluses

By Mackenzie Carpenter
and Sally Kalsen
Post-Gazette Staff Writers

Just before the Tot Stop Day Care Center in Bentleyville was scheduled to open last year, state inspectors found guns and ammunition in a closet.

At Angel's Ark in Springdale, the center was cited for letting children watch a video of "Mrs. Doubtfire."

And at 148 centers across the Pittsburgh region, inspectors found 203 instances of broken, dirty or unsuitable toys and play equipment.

All this information was contained in the

inspection reports that are filed with the state. They are public records, and anyone can look at them.

The inspection records are valuable information, but they don't come close to telling the whole story about a child care facility.

The Tot Stop day care center's director, Cheryl Besedick, for example, had no idea guns were being stored there by a tenant in an apartment next to the center. "Thank God they were found," she told a reporter.

Those reports don't tell what's good about any of the region's 542 centers. You will never see an inspection report in Pennsylvania that reads, "excellent interaction between children

and adults," or "wonderful use of art materials."

Nor do the reports tell you one of the worst things about a center — that an allegation of child abuse or neglect has been made. Those cases are referred to police or county youth services officials and are not noted on the public record.

And while state officials know that some violations are more serious than others, there is no indication of that on the reports. Degrading language, for example, is noted in much the same way as outdated syrup of Ipecac — even though many doctors insist that syrup of Ipecac never expires.

Each violation is duly noted on the report,

Accredited centers

The gold standard for day care is accreditation, and here is a list of centers in Western Pennsylvania that have met the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a private organization whose requirements exceed those of most states. (As of April 26, 1996)

ABC's for Children, Greentree
AGH Center for Children, North Side
Altoona Area School District, Altoona
Beth El Nursery School, Scott
Beulah Christian Preschool, Penn Hills
Carnegie Mellon University Child Care Center, Oakland
Carriage House Children's Center, Squirrel Hill
Child Advocates of Blair County Head Start, Altoona
Children's Center of Pittsburgh, Oakland
Congregation Beth Shalom Early Childhood Dept., Squirrel Hill
Covenant Church Christian Preschool, Ligonier
Crafton Children's Corner, Sheraden
Day Care Services Blair County, Bertram Leopold CDC, Altoona
Day Care Services of Blair County, Tyrone
Dravosburg United Methodist Church Nursery School, Dravosburg
Earl R. Siler Children Learning Complex, Clarion
Echo Child Development Centers, Inc., Connellsville
Echo Child Development Centers, Inc./Masontown
Echo Child Development Centers, Inc., Uniontown
Hampton Presbyterian Church Children's Center, Gibsonia

Hiland Child Care Center, Ross
Indiana County Child Day Care Program, Inc., Indiana
Ingomar UMC Preschool/Child Development Center
Jewish Community Center Nursery and Kindergarten, Squirrel Hill
Meadville Cooperative Preschool, Inc., Meadville
Mercy Hospital Child Development Center, Uptown
Mushroom Family Learning Center, Mt. Lebanon
North Hills Passavant Hospital Children's House
Point Park Children's School, Downtown
Riverview Children's Center, Verona
Seton Hill College Early Childhood Programs, Greensburg
Shady Lane School, East End
Shadyside Presbyterian Church Nursery School
Small Wonders at UPMC, Oakland
Small Wonders Child Development Center, Willow Grove
Southminster Nursery School, Mt. Lebanon
Slippery Rock University/SGA Preschool and Child Care Center
St. Benedict Center, Erie
St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School, Mt. Lebanon
St. Paul's United Methodist Church Preschool (2 sites), Allison Park
Tender Care Learning Center, Shadyside
Truxal Preschool Learning Center, Greensburg
University Child Development Center, Oakland
Valley Community Services, Cheswick
Westminster Child Care Center, Upper St. Clair
Westminster Nursery School, Upper St. Clair

Source: Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children

Inspection reports

Findings between December 1994 — January 1996

The Post-Gazette examined inspection reports for 542 centers in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties. While inspection reports do not generally address the quality of a center's programs, they provide a guide to compliance with health and safety standards.

PERFECT SCORE:

Here's a list of all centers that had NO violations during this period:

Castle Shannon Learning Center
Color Me Happy, North Hills
Diversified Human Services, Monessen
Diversified Human Services, Monongehela
Echo Child Development, Connellsville
Highland Drive/Louise Child Care, East Liberty
Jeannette Children's Center, Jeannette
Kelly's Kids, Sarver
Mercy Hospital Child Development
Mt. Lebanon Extended Day Program/School Age
Mt. Lebanon Extended Day Program/Foster School
Mt. Lebanon Extended Day Program/Mt. Lebanon High School
New Kensington YMCA/Burrell, Lower Burrell
Pgh. Board of Ed./Friendship Child Care
Sunshine Kids, McMurray
Tender Care Learning Center, Greentree
Tender Care Learning Center, McCandless
Tender Care Learning Center, Robinson Township
Tiny Tot Child Development Center, Rochester
Training Wheels, North Side
YMCA of Pittsburgh/Lincoln Elementary
YMCA/Avonworth Elementary
YMCA/Latrobe Elementary School Age
YMCA/O'Hara School Age Program
Youngworld Day Care, Ingomar

MOST VIOLATIONS:

Here are the day care centers in the six-county region that had more than 15 violations for this period. Almost all were corrected.

CENTER	VIOLATIONS
YMCA Allegheny Program Center, North Side	64
Mother's Touch Childcare Center, North Side	48
Central Day Care, Scottdale	45
Ida Jones Day Care Centers, McKees Rocks	32
Lullaby Day Care II, Penn Hills	29
Mother's Helper Family Day Care, Oakdale	27
YMCA/Child Care/Downtown Program Center	27
Carlow Children's Center, Oakland	26
Angel's Ark, Springdale	25
Waterworks Child Development Center, Blawnox	24
Friendship Community Child Care Center, Friendship	23
YMCA/Homewood Brushton Center	22
Valley Special Needs Program, Cheswick	21
Bright & Early Daycare Center, Oakmont	20
Agape Child Care Center, North Side	19
Butler County YMCA Family Day Care	18
Rocking Horse Child Care, Etna	18
Tricie's Day Care Center, McKees Rocks	18
Yough Shore Manor Child Day Care Center, Boston	18
Young's Day Care Inc., Penn Hills	18
Evangel Assembly Daycare, North Side	17
Penn Pals Child Care Center II, Jeannette	17
Small Wonders at UPMC, Oakland	17
Small World Day Care Inc., Apollo	17
Tender Care Learning Center, Jefferson Hosp., S. Hills	16
Tender Loving Care Day Care, Bovard	16
Wee Care Day Care, Monongehela	16
YMCA of Pittsburgh/East Communities, Penn Hills	16
Youngworld II, Downtown	16

Graphic by Mackenzie Carpenter, Tim Dunham and Daniel Marsula/Post-Gazette

MOST SERIOUS VIOLATIONS:

Out of 542 centers, here are the numbers and percentages of those cited for what inspectors consider the six most serious violations.

ACCESS TO TOXICS: 109 centers, or 20 percent of the total.

LACK OF EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 79 centers, or 14.6 percent of the total.

NOT ENOUGH ADULTS FOR CHILDREN (ADULT-CHILD RATIO): 43 centers, or 8 percent of total.

LACK OF SUPERVISION: 35 centers, 6 percent of total.

TOO LARGE A GROUP SIZE: 25 centers, 4.6

percent of total.

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES (HARSH, Demean-ING LANGUAGE): 9 centers, 1.7 percent of total.

10 MOST FREQUENT VIOLATIONS:

PAPERWORK ON CRIMINAL AND CHILD ABUSE CLEARANCES: 215 violations, 6.4 percent of 3,355 total violations.

ADULT MEDICAL RECORDS: 215 violations, 6.4 percent.

BROKEN, DIRTY OR UNSAFE TOYS AND PLAY EQUIPMENT: 203 violations, 6.1 percent.

WALLS, CEILINGS, FLOORS, PLAYSPACES

DIRTY OR IN DISREPAIR: 144 violations, 4.3 percent.

ACCESS TO TOXICS: 128 violations, 3.8 percent

PEELING PAINT: 126 violations, 3.8 percent.

SAFETY: INCOMPLETE FIRST AID KIT: 120 violations, 3.6 percent.

INCOMPLETE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION: 93 violations, 2.8 percent

ADULT REFERENCES, EDUCATION, WORK EXPERIENCE VERIFICATION: 87 violations, 2.6 percent

NO ELECTRICAL OUTLET COVERS: 83 violations, 2.5 percent

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along with a "plan of correction" — often a statement along the lines of "will never do that again." Then there's a note in the margin that says "approved" or "abated," which means that the provider made good on the promise.

Infrequently, a provider will deny, in writing, that the violation ever occurred. And in a handful of cases, the words "not abated" appear.

That usually means the center is headed for trouble — a provisional license or an order to close down.

The Post-Gazette examined all the 1995 inspection reports for all licensed day care facilities serving seven or more children in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

Some key findings for a 14-month period dating from December 1994 through January 1996:

- Nearly half of all centers had fewer than four violations for all of 1995. Another 156 centers had between five and nine violations.
- Thirteen centers had more than 20 violations.
- Nine centers were cited because inspectors either observed staffers using "degrading language or ridicule" towards children, or confirmed a complaint of that.
- Two centers were cited for violating a ban on physical punishment.
- And only three centers were cited for failing to meet the state's standard for "developmentally appropriate practices" — activities appropriate to a child's age.
- The most frequent violations were paperwork-related: 215 citations for failing to have child abuse and criminal background check clearances for employees, and another 215 for inadequate medical records.

• In the category of most serious violations, access to toxic substances led the way, with 109 centers violating that rule. That was followed by lack of emergency telephone numbers, excessive staff-to-child ratios, poor child supervision, improper group size and incorrect discipline.

The chart below provides more details from the inspection reports.

INSPECTION SAMPLER



Here are excerpts of some of the more serious or unusual violations found in the Department of Public Welfare's 1995 day care inspection reports in the Pittsburgh region. Unless otherwise noted, directors acknowledged these violations and corrected them.

"REAR of the facility is adjacent to buildings which are condemned and in total disrepair; [buildings are] non-inhabited and there is no fencing to restrict children from this unsafe area."

"EMPLOYEE singled out a child for ridicule and used demeaning language in the presence of children." Employee was fired.

"Front door of facility was open with no screen.

Two windows in preschool classroom are broken."

"Bottle of formula found in basket of toxics."

"Preschool children watched a PG-13 movie (Mrs. Doubtfire)."

"Preschool child was placed in high chair for approximately five to fifteen minutes for disciplinary purposes." (Response by provider: "Parent suggested placing child in high chair — we tried — it didn't work. In future will use time out.")

"DIRECTOR has singled out a child in care with threats and harsh language." (Response from director: "The child and parent were apologized to and the director will ensure that children in care are not singled out with threats or harsh language ever in the future.")

"OBSERVED two training chairs with urine in them at the time of the complaint investigation."

"INTERVIEWS with other staff persons in the facility reveal facility person H.W. ridicules children and threatens children. Statements made to children include 'I'll smack you' and calling a child a spoiled brat."

"STAFFER disciplined her own child in the child care facility using harsh, demeaning and abusive language." (Director's response: Staff will be instructed, take parenting classes.)

"A CHILD that fell down steps three weeks ago did not have this reported to parents, nor was an accident report filled out."

"Children at facility were walking on streets that often have busy street traffic and dangerous intersections."

"A 10-INCH black rat was observed" in

basement below infant room.

"An old refrigerator with the door still attached and wooden sawhorses were observed in the children's outdoor play space."

"A telephone wire was observed adjacent to an infant's crib. Child was observed in the crib reaching for the telephone wire."

Dirty floors, broken and dirty toys and equipment, and space heater in infant room also observed. *This center is now closed.*

"STAFF person K.H. used inappropriate discipline with child A.E., by placing his hand on the lower part of the child's face in an effort to redirect the child." Staffer terminated.

"TWO five-year-old children concealed themselves beneath a tent-like structure while engaging in alleged inappropriate activity while a third child looked on. Because the children were unable to be seen, heard, directed and assessed, it is determined lack of supervision by staff had occurred."

"STAFF person V.H. admitted to striking a child with a stick."

"V.H. stated that she transported children aged 20 months and under 4 years of age without using car seats."

"CHILDREN playing in an unfenced grassy area next to Route 66."

"Cemented area in rear used for riding equipment has open area leading to a ravine. According to staff, children were permitted to continue using area after previous citation for same violation."

"TWO children wandered away, were found a mile away before staff realized they were gone."

"DURING a complaint investigation, L.W. was observed using harsh and demeaning language while in the presence of children. She specifically degraded a child's parent in the presence of other staff and children." *Center has since closed.*

"AT 11:30 A.M. a child was injured at the center and the parent was not notified until 2:30 p.m. This child was taken to emergency room by mother. Mother was not notified at time of accident." (Director's response: "If a child needs medical care we will notify parents as soon as possible in order to secure medical care.")

"ONE hundred thirty children attending summer day care, capacity of facility is 33."

Nine staffers working without valid child abuse clearances.

Two children left alone in classroom.

Pittsburgh's Arsenal Center was a child care pioneer

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

A lot of the best child care in the Pittsburgh region can be traced to a single wellspring: The Arsenal Family and Children's Center in Lawrenceville.

Arsenal was founded in 1952 by the University of Pittsburgh's dynamic duo of child development: Benjamin Spock and the late Margaret McFarland. Their purpose was to teach graduate-level students about the normal development of children, using a laboratory setting.

"There really was nothing else like it at the time," said Nancy Curry, a child psychologist, psychoanalyst and former associate director of Arsenal.

"Some other universities had children's centers, but they only enrolled employees' children. The idea behind Arsenal was to make it a real neighborhood center."

And real neighborhood children came — ages 3 to 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Arsenal brought in students from the Pitt child development program to serve as assistants to the head teachers, who were often graduates of the program themselves.

"It wasn't day care, because most of the mothers didn't work," said Curry. "It was just an opportunity for the families to be a part of something new and exciting."

Arsenal drew students of medicine, child development, nursing and social work, residents in pediatrics and child psychiatry and psychology — even students from the Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute and the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. They observed, participated in the children's groups and at-

tended Spock's weekly case conferences.

Famed child development expert Erik Erikson came to Arsenal once a month as a consultant, and the center drew other authorities in the field from all over the country.

Fred Rogers took courses at Arsenal while a seminary student. His association with McFarland lasted to the end of her life,

and he has always credited her as the greatest influence on "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood."

Natalie Kaplan, director of Carriage House Children's Center in Squirrel Hill, did a graduate internship with Spock at Arsenal. Marsha Poster, director of the Carnegie Mellon Child Care Center, was a graduate assistant there. The late William Hignett, founder of



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New ideas in day care: From left, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Pittsburgh Mayor David L. Lawrence and Homer B. Hall, a Scaife Foundation executive, with two children at the opening of Arsenal Family and Children's Center.

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Louise Child Care, was a teacher at Arsenal and later became an associate director. And at least a dozen more of the region's most respected child care figures came through the Arsenal program.

In fact, some say that Arsenal's legacy is a major reason the Pittsburgh region has nearly twice as many child care centers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children today as does the Philadelphia region, even though Philadelphia has twice as many child care facilities.

Spock remained at Pitt for five years, from 1951 to 1955. He had already published his best-selling "Baby and Child Care" in 1946, and went on to produce nine other advice books about children and parenting.

In the 1970s, Arsenal added a training branch to improve the quality of care at all the day care centers in Western Pennsylvania. Louise Child Care's current mentoring and training program is an outgrowth of that.

At Arsenal, early childhood teachers learned to use practices that matched the stage of a young child's development, so that 2-year-olds didn't stand in line to go to the bathroom, and show-and-tell didn't drag on for an hour with 3-year-olds who couldn't sit still.

In 1979, Pitt announced that it was closing Arsenal

after repeated funding crises made it too expensive to maintain. So the community formed its own board of directors and turned it into an independent non-profit agency in 1980.

It has operated that way ever since, at the same address, 3939 Penn Ave. Three satellite locations have been added in Clairton. Funding comes from public and private sources, plus program and training contracts with other groups.

Arsenal today is no longer an early childhood laboratory. Instead, it offers classes and programs to teach parenting skills and prevent child abuse by building good relationships between children and their primary caregivers.

"Our aim is to get adults passionately invested in their children, so that they will make a commitment to walk through life with each child," said Arsenal Director Von Keairns.

Not surprisingly, she, too, has a long history with the Arsenal center — she began there 30 years ago as McFarland's graduate assistant.

"I never left Arsenal," Keairns said. And Arsenal, it appears, has never left those who learned about children there.

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In Denmark, every child is guaranteed good care — and the more disadvantaged the family, the more help it gets. Lizbeth Waadegaard and her daughter Ditte make their way to Villa Rose, a day care center in Copenhagen. Waadegaard is a single mother, and her daughter has a heart condition, which enabled Ditte to gain entrance to one of the best day care centers in the city without being placed on a waiting list.

Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette



The Danish model

More public support, less-organized curriculum, more security for mom



Many Americans think of Europe as the embodiment of government-subsidized day care. It is — but it's more than that. Most European nations also use their

tax money to pay parents to stay home with young children. So the U.S. actually has a higher proportion of 6-month-old babies in care outside the home

than in Europe. At older preschool ages, though, day care is much more heavily used in Europe — and much more affordable. While 61 percent of U.S. 4-year-olds are in preschool, the percentages in Europe range from 98 percent in Belgium to 71 percent in Portugal.

The gap reflects a different attitude. In Europe, taxpayers don't think twice about subsidizing high quality child care. And while some European nations have begun debating whether to slash their extensive social programs, it's unlikely child care will take the first hit, because it is perceived as freeing parents to work. And where does the best child care in Europe exist? Experts say Scandinavia, and for younger children, Denmark. So we went to see for ourselves.

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By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer



COPENHAGEN

In a side street just off the Istedgade, this beautiful city's notorious red-light district, is the closest thing in Denmark to a slum — although it actually resembles Liberty Avenue Downtown on a bad day.

There are discount clothing stores, a greengrocer's, and then, a sign that announces "Sex and Porno Center." A heroin addict weaves out of a doorway. The winds off the Baltic Sea scatter crumpled newspapers across the street, an unusual display of disorder in this universally tidy culture.

But even in this forlorn neighborhood, you can open the door of a dingy building and step inside to what the Danes call "hygge" (pronounced *hig-gah*), or coziness: a world of sunlight, space, child-sized furniture painted in primary colors, comfort, cheerfulness and safety.

This is Danish day care, cluttered, somewhat chaotic at first glance, but consistently excellent in quality, no matter what the neighborhood or social class of children using it.

In this center, Shahida, a day care provider and immigrant from Pakistan, is busy chasing Linnea, dressed in high heels and feather boa, down a hallway, while Nicolai, a cheerful, beefy 22-year-old, is in the small, well-equipped kitchen, cleaning up after lunch, which he cooked himself.

Around the main playroom, there are low shelves stacked with wooden puzzles, colored paper, beads, dominoes, paint — in plentiful supply, all paid for by the state, all the same quality and quantity as anywhere else.

In this center, most of the children are foreigners, from Pakistan, the Philippines or Yugoslavia. If their parents work, it's mostly in factory jobs, but unemployment in this group is high.

Language difficulties, too, can be a problem — but not today. A Pak-

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Marie Louise, 3, Andras, 2, and Lukas, 2, work on their lunch at the Villa Rose day care center in Copenhagen. Danish children are taught to do for themselves at an earlier age than in the United States.

istani boy named Adam brings out his prized collection of Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, which attracts an admiring clutch of 4-year-old boys.

"Go, go Power Rangers," they chant, breaking up in giggles. Communication established.

A model system

Is this the best day care in the world?

Well, maybe not *the* best. It's every bit as good in Sweden, in Italy — even in the United States, if you can find it.

But per capita, there is more high quality day care available for more children under age 3 here than just about anywhere else, the experts say.

In a country where nearly 90 percent of women under age 45 are either at work or are looking for it, day care is everywhere, it seems, on every third street corner in downtown Copenhagen, or tucked away in a suburban cul-de-sac, its presence revealed by the telltale smiley faces pasted on the windows, and the oversized baby carriages parked in the courtyards, where every day,

the children take their outdoor naps, rain or shine, summer or winter.

From the time of a child's first birthday, when the state-subsidized one-year parental leave ends, day care becomes a permanent fixture in children's lives, and few question whether they would be better off at home with their mothers.

"You are never going to get us back in the kitchen," declares Ulla Broen, a government employee, when asked about the whereabouts of the stay-at-home mom.

Danish day care is just one thread in an extensive, elaborate social fabric that extends across Europe and includes child allowance payments to families, maternity and parental leave, housing and transportation.

▼ ▼ ▼
photographs by
annie o'neill

Certainly, there are strains in the fabric. Steep taxes for all these services have contributed to high unemployment, big budget deficits and stagnant job growth. Yet any efforts by the government to cut the benefits have been met with fierce public resistance.

More than any of its neighbors, Denmark has committed itself to the notion that mothers want to go back to work as soon as "the baby year," as it's called, is over, and that they want excellent day care.

And in this land of the 50-percent tax rate, where health care is free, where college is free, the state is ready and able to give these parents what they want.

"It's an enormous relief," said Lena Walsh, a 30-year-old part-time working mother with two small children. "You have such security. You know they will be looked after by trained staff who actually know what they're doing."

Of course, this is a country with only 6,000 facilities serving 100,000 children, compared with about 100,000 centers in the United States serving 8 million children.

Even so, a much higher proportion of

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Sometimes, it's important to take a little time out from the hectic pace of life, and Fredrick, 2, finds a nook at Villa Rose to take a rest.

Danish children are in day care than in the United States — about 60 percent of children under 2 are in day care centers here, compared with 30 percent in the United States. Among older children, day care use in Denmark is close to 80 percent, and were it not for the long waiting lists at many places, those numbers would be even higher.

Other contrasts with the United States also are striking:

- The annual expenditure at a Danish day care center is \$12,324 per child — significantly more than the \$5,000-\$7,000 it costs to provide most day care in the United States. This is partly due to cost-of-living differences — this is a country where a Big Mac, french fries and a Coke cost \$10 and the cheapest automobile goes for \$25,000. But another major reason for the discrepancy is that the Danish government is willing to spend more for high-quality day care —

for higher salaries and better equipment, facilities and training.

- In Denmark, the wealthiest parents are expected to pay 30 percent of the cost, but most Danes pay closer to 10 or 20 percent — or about \$2,000 a year — and poor families don't pay anything. That's a lot less than the average \$5,000 fee paid by Americans.

- Day care workers here are paid close to what the average female production worker earns — \$32,461 a year. That's more than twice the average U.S. day care worker's \$13,000 a year salary, although the substantial taxes and the higher cost of living in Denmark make direct comparisons difficult.

- Staff-to-children ratios are one adult per 2.7 children in groups under age 3 and one adult for every 5.5 children in groups aged 3 to 6. Compare that to minimum ratios in Pennsylvania of one adult for four infants, one to six for 2-year-olds and one to 10 for preschoolers.

- At each center, most staffers have three-year degrees in child development, usually from a vocational school. In Pennsylvania, only higher-level staffers must have college degrees, and not necessarily in a field related to children.

- "Childminders" at family day care homes who are accepted into the Danish system must undergo at least two to three weeks of training, and are then visited twice a month by local inspectors. No such training or frequent monitoring exists for family day care providers in the United States.

Different moods

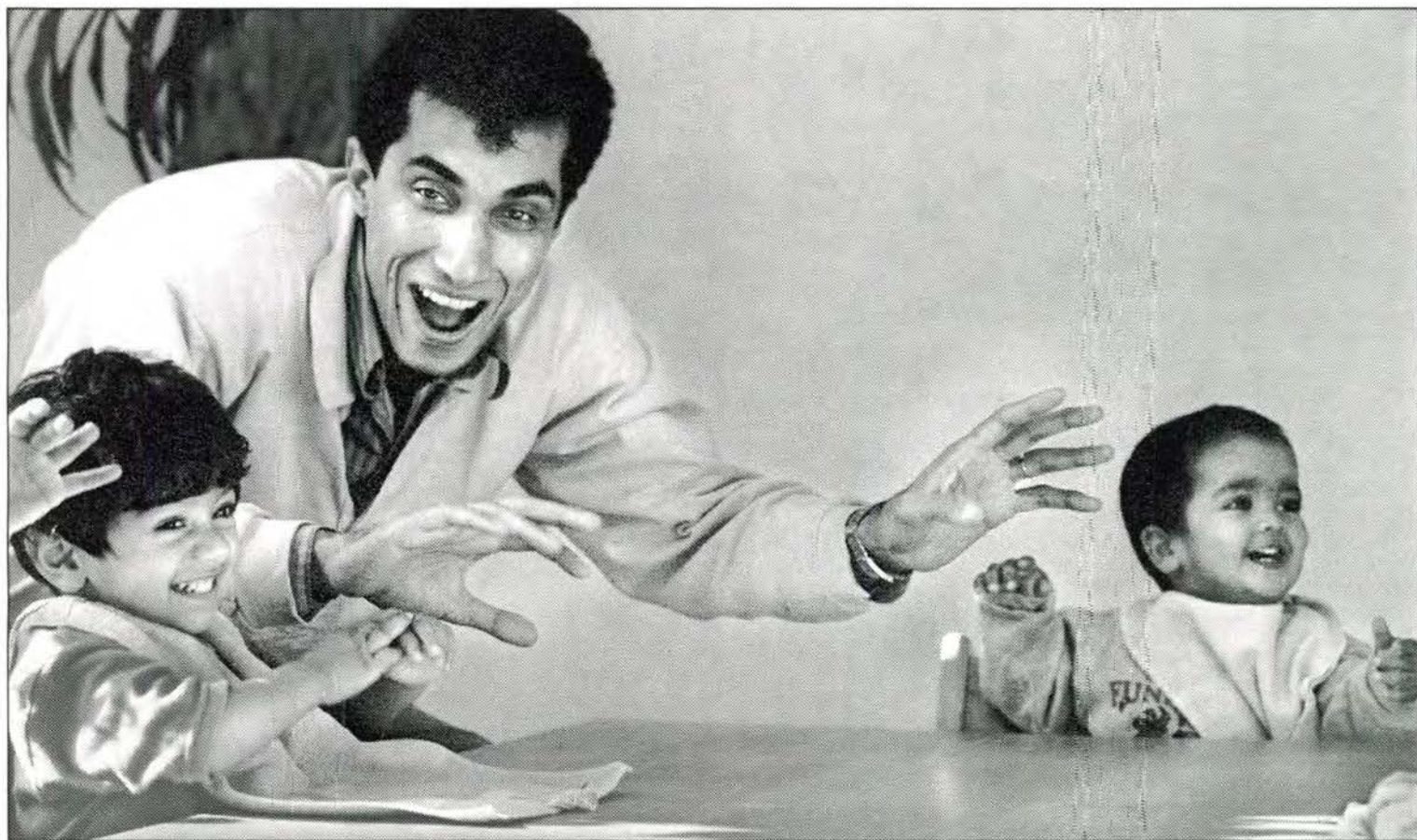
Despite the consistently even quality, this is no monolithic system of bland, cookie-cutter centers.

There is a palpable difference of mood, for instance, between "Villa Rose," a stately if somewhat dilapidated mansion behind high walls in an affluent part of the city, and

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Denmark today defies the stereotypes of a homogenous society. At many day care centers, there are dark faces amidst the blond-haired and blue eyed children — immigrants from the Middle East who are entitled to the same good child care as everyone else. Sassan, 35, sings a lunch-time song to Raihan, left, from Iran, and Mousin, of India, at the Oasen day care center in Copenhagen. The government has been encouraging more men to work in child care to provide role models for boys at day care centers. Below, left, Sassan comforts Emine, 3, after a fall while Billy, 2, keeps close. Below, right, he puts a child down for a nap. Sassan is an Iranian native who came to Denmark 12 years ago, and he dreams of starting his own child care organization to reach out to the world's homeless children.



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"Oasen," a squat, utilitarian day care center off a busy thoroughfare in a working-class neighborhood.

When the children at "Villa Rose" cry, most seem easily comforted. Children of doctors and lawyers, their lives are occasionally stressful, but mostly secure. Dressed in their bright Scandinavian cottons, the little Olivers and Emilies represent the "haves" in Danish society.

At Oasen, where many parents are unemployed or are immigrants, the children's tears don't vanish as quickly. There is more clinging and aggression mixed together, which is apparent during a morning visit.

In a large, light-filled central room, a little girl in a faded turtleneck and jeans is grimly flying through the air on the "gynge," a lethal-looking swing that is suspended from the ceiling, barely missing the three children who race by her.

Another little girl sits in a corner sniffing, refusing efforts to comfort her.

"Perhaps some of the children here do not smile as much, or they have more trouble in the morning when they get here, than at other places," Oasen's director, Birthe Harboe, said with a wistful smile.

To compensate for those stresses, the families who use Oasen get liberal social support. Parents are welcome to have breakfast at the center with their children before going to work, or use the playground after hours. And because many of them live in apartments without private bathrooms, parents are given keys on weekends to use the centers for bathing.

Less anxiety about safety

At "Husumvold," a center tucked away on a wooded lot in a modest middle-class suburb west of the city, it's snack time.

Three-year-old Sofie has deftly poured herself some juice into an open cup and then pushed the pitcher across the table to Mathias, who, without spilling, helps himself and then passes the pitcher along to his neighbor, with a dexterity not often seen in American children of the same age.

In fact, Danish children are taught to do for themselves a bit earlier than in the United States, and safety issues are not handled with the same degree of seriousness.

At one private family day care home north of Copenhagen, there were stairways, but no gates blocking them; the knobs on the kitchen stove were uncovered, and the family day care provider seemed stunned when asked if her hot water temperature was below 120 degrees (a major preoccupation with day care inspectors in the United



Mousin, an Indian child at Oasen, a Danish day care center for mostly low-income children, was not happy that a playmate knocked over his toys. Mousin was quickly soothed by a day care worker.

States).

"I just tell the children not to touch," said Hanne Danielsson, the family day care provider. "That's how they learn, no?"

Even child bicycle helmets, for example, are prohibited by Danes, who believe the risk is greater that a child will jump off a bike and onto a jungle gym — and choke on the chin straps.

"In U.S. preschools, kids weren't allowed to do anything just a little bit dangerous, like climbing a tree. It was, 'Oh no, they could scratch their skin,'" recalls Johnny Bonke, whose children attended American day care during the three years he spent in Minnesota working for an engineering company. "In day care here, they're allowed to do what they're there to do. I actually think that Danish children move about better in all situations, because they are allowed to do more."

Us vs. them

Besides the ubiquitous day care, the other difference between Denmark and the United States is the paid leave offered to all new Danish parents. It was recently expanded from six months to one year, and made available to parents of older children.

It's still relatively short compared with other paid leaves in Europe, but very popular, so much so that hospitals experienced staff shortages recently when many of their nurses decided to take time off.

Fueling this reliance on paid leave and day care are two other trends — divorce and single motherhood. In Denmark, there are two divorces for every three weddings, and single moms are in every age group and every economic spectrum.

Lisbeth Waadegaard's story is typical.

Her boyfriend abandoned her a few months before their daughter Ditte was born — a memory that still makes her weep.

"I just wanted a little happy family," she said, her eyes brimming.

But in Denmark, adversity has its consolations. Waadegaard's daughter Ditte has a heart condition, and because of that, and her own single status, Waadegaard was able to vault a long waiting list and get her daughter into Villa Rose.

One morning, after dropping her 18-month-old daughter off at the center, she sat on the wooden steps overlooking the playground and mused about her future.

University-educated, a former social

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Lisbeth Waadegaard, left, a single mother in Copenhagen, says goodbye to her daughter Ditte at Villa Rose day care center. This was Ditte's first day at the center without her mom. Above left, Ditte plays with Yvonne, one of her caregivers, while above right, she shows her best tooth-brushing form to Marianni, a staffer at the center.

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There are plenty of adults for children at Danish day care centers, averaging one adult per 2.7 children in groups under age 3 and one adult for every 5.5 children in groups age 3 to 6. Here, Marianni, Addy and Yvonne care for a group of 18-month-to-3-year-olds at Villa Rose.

worker, Waaddegaard isn't even looking for a job right now.

"I'm not sure what I'm going to do today. Maybe paint, maybe go for a walk in the woods. I need to think about what kind of work I want to do" when she returns to the job market, she told a visitor.

"There are a lot of us," added another single mother sitting on the ledge of a nearby sandbox. Her name was Helle — "Hell with an 'e'" she wryly told a visitor. While puffing a cigarette, she kept close watch on her son Andreas. "Our children don't know their fathers. The fathers don't know even if they want to be fathers," she added, with a trace of sarcasm.

The lack of father figures is a very real worry for Danish authorities. So the government has initiated something roughly translated as "the Tarzan project," designed to recruit more men to work at day care centers.

The Danes also have attempted to mimic

family structures in other areas: there is no separation into neat age groups, with 11-month-olds in one room or 2-year-olds in another. Not only does this create "sibling" groups, it caters to the natural instinct of children to choose playmates of different ages, experts believe.

Danish day care centers have no lesson plans. There is no 45-minute block of "story time," "sand table time" "gross motor play" or "dramatic play." Reading and writing exercises? Not until age 6 or 7, unless the child shows an interest.

"Curriculum is anathema to the Danes," explains Sheila B. Kamerman, an expert on European child care. Instead, good day care means "planned chaos, a lot of spontaneous movement, that never gets out of hand, because they always have plenty of staff around who know how to help children achieve what they need to achieve."

How different are they?

So, can we learn anything from the Danes' comprehensive commitment to high quality child care? Would we want to?

It wouldn't be the first time we've borrowed ideas from other countries. We've already looked to Germany for kindergarten, to Japan for carmaking.

But mention any Scandinavian country to Americans and expect either wistful sighs — or a collective rolling of the eyes, with muttering about socialism and "those taxes."

And some ask whether Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland are "too homogenous" for comparison with our society.

But Kamerman, who along with her partner Alfred J. Kahn, has done more than a dozen studies of day care programs in industrialized countries, rejects that argument.

"If you look at Europe in general, you're looking at 350 million people, with a population that's very diverse, but all of them have generous child allowances and parental leaves and day care of some sort," she said.

Trying to get U.S. lawmakers to see the advantages of such policies, though, has been a tough sell, she said.

"We've been testifying about this on Capitol Hill for the past 25 years" and have had almost no impact, she said with a rueful laugh.

"There's a kind of irrationality, in fact, about an American public that in theory values children, but in practice finds it so difficult to pay taxes that in Europe everyone takes for granted and pays without a second thought."

Part of the reason may be that for every Sheila Kamenman who touts the benefits of the European system, there are critics like Allan Carlson, an analyst at the Rockford Institute, a conservative, Illinois-based think tank.

Carlson, too, has spent much time dissecting Scandinavian social-welfare programs, and he, along with Bill Mattox at the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., have influenced the debate in Congress whenever the issue of state-subsidized day care comes up.

The easy availability of day care in Denmark, especially at the very youngest ages, Carlson said, has hastened the disappearance of the traditional family — and children suffer because of it.

"You're substituting the state for the husband, and that's going to be an extremely expensive burden for the state, to maintain all those families," he said. "The mother at home with her children loves her children. She makes deep and incredible sacrifices for her children out of hormonal instincts. She is deeply committed to that child, more so than the average worker, who just isn't going to provide the same commitment."

"In my view, relative to a functional definition of a family, there isn't one to be found anymore in Denmark," said Carlson.

Then there are those who admire the Scandinavian approach, but prefer Sweden over Denmark because of Sweden's promotion of "active parenting" policies instead of day care. Sweden offers paid 18-month leaves for each parent and six-hour workdays until the child turns 8.

Danish officials say that option is too expensive for them.

In fact, money is a major concern. All across Europe, social programs are under pressure from budget-cutters facing huge deficits. While no one expects a dismantling of Denmark's day care system, there are ripples of worry.

Barbara Willer, an official at the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the United States, remembers meeting a delegation from Denmark last year that was examining America's privatized child care system.

"They were looking at us, in part because of concerns, frankly, about whether their country's publicly funded system was going to remain viable in the future," she said.

But for now, most Danes are proud of their day care and the welfare state that nourishes it — except for a small minority that has fled the country and settled in southern England to protest the tax burden.

Ulla Broen, a deputy at the Ministry of Social Affairs, puts it this way:

"I know that if catastrophe comes, I will no longer be proud to be Danish. I will be grateful."



Children under age 3 usually spend naptime outdoors, rain or shine, in buggies parked in outdoor sheds like the one at Villa Rose — unless the temperature goes below 30 degrees. It's all part of a strong belief that fresh air is good for children's health. Here, Otto, 3, isn't quite ready to go to sleep as he investigates workers putting another toddler down for a nap.

Fond of fresh air

Danish children nap outdoors



Outside each day care center in Denmark, there are long, low sheds that look like they might be used to store bicycles or yard equipment.

But they're not.

Instead, they're used to store baby carriages — with babies in them.

Each day after lunch, all children 3 and under are placed in the prams and covered up for their daily nap — unless the temperature goes below 30 degrees.

"It's a healthy thing to do," said Anne Vibeke Petersen, of the Villa Rose child care center outside Copenhagen.

*story by
mackenzie
carpenter*

*photographs
by annie
o'neill*

A far cry from the spindly umbrella-stroller found in shopping malls across America, Danish baby buggies are tall, broad-beamed contraptions, bouncing on white rubber tires — more

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1958 Buick than Ford Escort. And they are everywhere: beside tables in elegant cafes, wheeled onto commuter trains, and most amazingly, parked outside stores with babies sleeping soundly within, while the parents shop inside.

The outdoor baby buggies not only symbolize the Danes' belief that a little fresh air never hurt anybody, but show their relaxed attitude toward personal safety.

Some child care experts think this devotion to the outdoors stems from concerns in northern European countries about tuberculosis, which is spread more easily indoors. Further south, very different attitudes prevail.

Columbia University's Sheila Kamen points out, for example, that Italian schools only recently have built extensive outdoor play areas for children — perhaps, she suggests, because of long-standing fears about mosquito-borne malaria.

Danish attitudes about fresh air aren't found in a lot of U.S. day care centers, many of which get cited by inspectors for not taking children outside each day.

And with our crime rate, it's unlikely American centers will ever contemplate leaving babies unattended outdoors.

Lone Bonke, a 35-year-old Danish mother of two who spent three years in the U.S., found that out the hard way.

One chilly, sunny day in Minnesota, after she bundled up her 3-month-old daughter, Astrid, in warm clothes, Bonke placed her in a baby carriage and wheeled her outside.

"I was standing there in my kitchen, and I had the window open," Bonke recalls, "and this woman came up. I'd never seen her before or since. She rang my doorbell and told me that she was so angry [about my daughter sleeping outside] that I deserved to have her kidnapped. And then she was gone."

Stunned, Bonke ran out, gathered up her child, went inside and dissolved in tears.

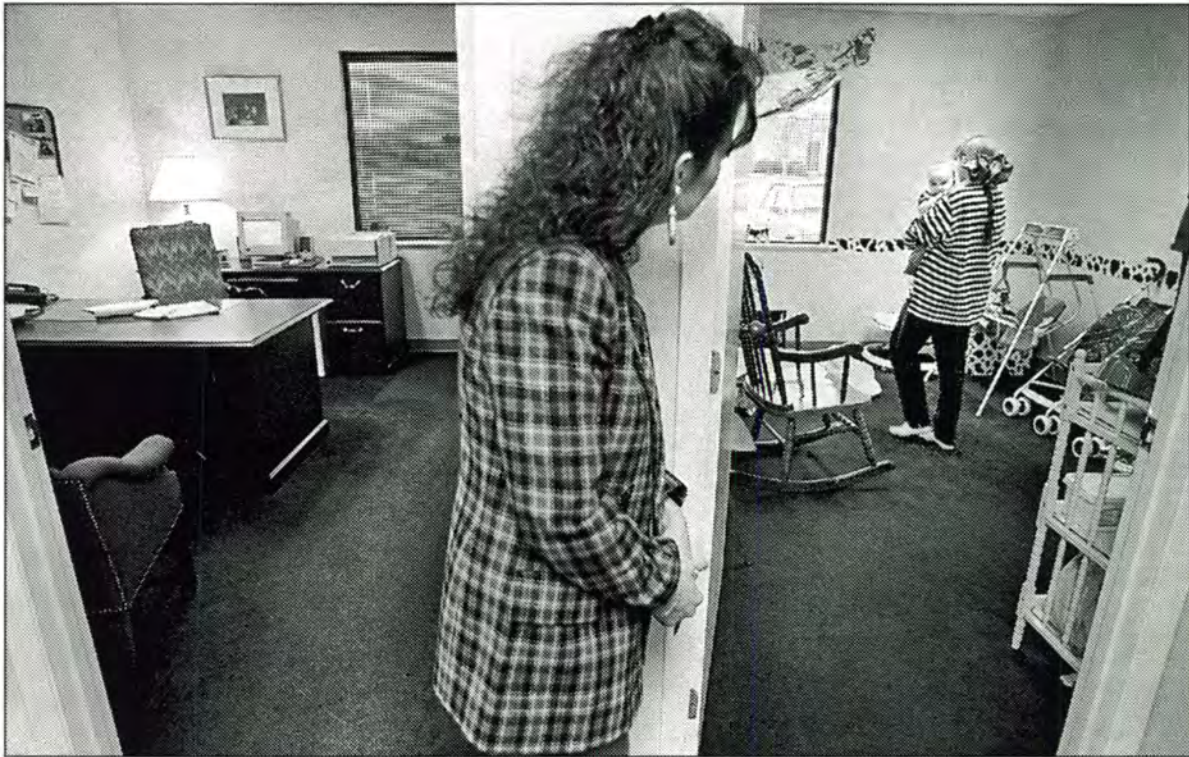
Now that she knows the American culture better and can speak better English, Bonke wishes she could relive that moment.

"If someone said that to me today, I would have just said why don't you mind your own business, or something like that," she said in her soft Danish lilt.



Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

On an afternoon shopping excursion, a mother in Copenhagen left her infant in the carriage while she went inside a boutique.



Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

Making day care succeed requires innovation, and approaches that once might have been unthinkable. At Child Care Solutions in Fayetteville, N.C., program director Julie Spears, above, instituted on-site day care. She is among the employees using the service: Her twin boys are cared for in a room adjacent to her office.

Seeking solutions

Day care isn't going away; improving it will take initiative

By Mackenzie Carpenter
and Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writers

Most Americans believe children are a precious resource — but they don't agree on the best way to take care of them.

And that means there is no consensus on the issue of day care.

Proponents see child care as a way of helping children be all that they can be. Critics see it as a contributing cause to the dissolution of the nuclear family. Workers see it as a necessity. Businesses often have a hard time seeing it as an investment that will pay off in the long term.

And politicians frequently don't see it at all.

One thing is certain, though: The need for day care isn't going to go away — and much of what is out there is mediocre.

So why haven't we acted, collectively, to ensure that more young children in this country get the type and quality of care that they need?

Our problem can be summed up in one word.

"Focus."

Day care is so hard to get a fix on, that finding a comprehensive solution to its problems is nearly impossible.

In the United States, where it is highly unlikely that a national, tax-subsidized day care system will ever emerge, maybe the answer is many different answers — a mul-

titude of innovative approaches that together might make a critical difference.

After 10 months of visiting child care centers, observing caregivers and children, reading the literature, interviewing parents and academics and child care providers, we offer some of the potential solutions the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette has found for improving child care in America:

- **PAID LEAVE** — If paid parental leave were entirely tax-funded, it could cost up to \$27 billion a year. But advocates say it would still be cheaper than high-quality infant care for the same children.

There is also the less expansive Canadian approach, which pays insured workers 57 percent of their wages for 15 weeks after childbirth as part of its unemployment com-

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pensation program.

In the current U.S. Congress, however, the odds of getting any kind of tax-supported parental leave seem nil. Top Republican staffers say they support paid leave for parents — if companies will finance it.

While a national program may be out of the question, paid parental leave at the state level is a possibility. Five states — California, Hawaii, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island — have temporary disability insurance programs for up to six months for most employees, and in New Jersey, legislation has been introduced that would expand the coverage to mothers after their children's births.

Edward Zigler, a noted child care expert from Yale University, has proposed that in addition to paid leave, a family be allowed to draw up to \$5,000 out of its own Social Security account when a child is born — money that would later be deducted from retirement pay. The sum could be used either for day care or to allow parents to stay home longer.

• **COMPANY ASSISTANCE** — Some of the most innovative solutions on child care are coming from corporate America. NationsBank, Motorola, Johnson & Johnson and IBM have introduced an extensive constellation of family-friendly benefits, including on-site care, direct subsidies, flexible work schedules and programs that allow employees to volunteer at their children's schools without a loss of salary. These programs have reduced turnover and increased productivity and worker loyalty in competitive job markets. But companies in slow-growth areas such as Pittsburgh have not felt the same pressures to institute them.

• **EMPLOYEE BENEFIT REFORMS** — Many companies still don't offer dependent care accounts, where parents can set aside up to \$5,000 of their pre-tax income for day care expenditures. And even in firms that do, some experts say, it's probably time for that ceiling to be raised, since child care often costs more than \$5,000 a year, especially for those with more than one child.

• **TAX REFORM** — Some conservatives are loath to see more subsidies for working parents that aren't also available to families with a stay-at-home parent. So they favor changes in federal tax policies instead, including: doubling the tax exemption for children; providing tax credits of up to \$1,000 for each child, as well as an extra cash allowance in the year of a child's birth; and converting the current credit for child care expenditures into a credit that benefits all families.

• **REGULATORY REFORM**. Most states concentrate on regulating day care

centers to ensure health and safety. But a few have begun experimenting with how they can upgrade the quality of programs and care at centers — mainly by using inspectors for that purpose. Vermont and Texas require that all inspectors have prior experience working at day care centers, and Michigan requires that its inspectors have master's degrees in child development.

Nothing like that is contemplated in Pennsylvania right now. However, the Ridge administration is working on a major overhaul of the state's human services statute, which includes day care regulation. If it were to be approved, the new system would decrease "unnecessary" regulation, while strengthening enforcement with such tools as fines ranging up to \$1,000 a day for serious repeat offenders.

• **PUBLIC EDUCATION**. Everyone says parents need to be better informed about the quality of child care.

One way to do it: a statewide "resource and referral system" that would provide parents with a quick, comprehensive source of information on day care. While such a program couldn't get into details about specific centers' violations, it could provide valuable assistance for parents uncertain of what to look for in a particular region. Such a bill is pending in the state Senate.

Also, the state could rate day care centers the way the Health Department rates restaurants, so that parents would know when a center had serious problems and when it had corrected them. Pennsylvania officials say this could create legal problems, but it's been done elsewhere with some success.

• **CONSTRUCTION AID**. The federal law that requires federally insured banks to make community investment funds available at affordable interest rates in moderate- and low-income neighborhoods can be used to build new child care centers.

Also, some states, such as Illinois, are issuing tax-exempt bonds, repayable in 10 years, to generate capital for child care providers; Hawaii had a statewide bond issue to build more day care centers.

Others advocate an idea called the Child Care Capital Investment Fund, financed by private foundations, to loan centers money for renovations, construction and refinancing. Such a program was instituted successfully in Massachusetts, and also provides "mini-loans" for smaller centers — say, \$5,000 for five years at a 5-percent interest rate — to be used for emergency repairs, replacing furnishings or purchasing new equipment.

• **DAY CARE WORKER LOAN FORGIVENESS** — Nearly everyone agrees that

the pay of day care workers, averaging about \$15,000 a year, is deplorable. One way to ease the burden of such low wages is tax breaks or college loan forgiveness for child care workers.

Pennsylvania had a \$300,000 loan forgiveness program, but the Ridge administration has proposed eliminating it in this year's budget.

• **TAX BREAKS** — What about tax breaks for day care providers? Pittsburgh currently taxes day care centers on their gross income, not their net — a huge financial burden for most to meet. Providers say a rethinking of this requirement is sorely needed.

• **GET WELL ROOMS** — Children get sick. And even in the best child care centers, some children get sick more often because of exposure to large groups. The result is a lot of mad scrambling for back-up, and a lot of lying by parents who call in to the office with "the flu," even though it's their child who has the 102-degree fever. One solution has been quietly working in Pittsburgh for the past six years. It's the Get Well Room, located in the Children's Center of Pittsburgh in Oakland, across the street from Magee Womens Hospital. Children are cared for by a registered nurse for half the day. The other half is covered by nursing students or other aides.

One drawback is cost: \$35 a day for school-age children, and \$45 for infants and toddlers. Some companies, however, help employees cover the cost.

• **LOCAL PRIVATE INITIATIVES**. This week, United Way of Allegheny County announced an unprecedented \$60-million initiative to create and improve early childhood programs for poor children. It may well be the largest infusion of private money into this cause anywhere in the country, and a lot of eyes will be watching to see three things: Will the United Way board of directors reach their fund-raising goal? Will the prevention-oriented programs succeed in breaking the "cycle of failure" that ends up costing society millions in dependency, police, prosecution and prisons? And if the initiative does show nascent signs of success at the end of five years, will taxpayers be willing to pick up the tab, as the United Way intends?

• **LOCAL PUBLIC INITIATIVES** — In 1990, the city enacted a proposal by Mayor Sophie Masloff that would require space to be set aside for day care in large new commercial buildings. Not much major construction has taken place since the law was enacted, but day care space is being set aside as new buildings go up at the Pittsburgh Technology Center.

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The Smart Start program in Cumberland County, N.C., provides teachers with mobile art trunks assembled especially for preschoolers by the Fayetteville Museum of Art. There are folk art, musical instrument and costume trunks.



One state breaks the mold

Smart Start creates new hope for improving day care in North Carolina

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.

The Church of God of Prophecy's day care center is hardly state of the art.

The rooms in the modest brick building are small, the lighting mostly fluorescent, the furniture plain. The children who go here are the sons and daughters of workers at the local Purolator or Black & Decker plant, without the means to pay high fees.

So when Prophecy's pastor, Steve Gilmer, decided that the center needed some help with improvements, he turned to Smart Start, a nationally praised, state-taxpayer-funded program created to lift North Carolina's children out of the bottom of the statistics heap.

Over the past 18 months, the church's day care center has purchased much-needed playground equipment and a new stove. It has sent

*story by
mackenzie carpenter*

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*photographs by
annie o'neill*

two of its teachers to school for associate's degrees in early childhood education, with the promise of salary bonuses if they complete their training.

Doctors and nurses have visited the facility to provide free medical screenings for children, and librarians have come too, bearing free books and expertise on reading techniques and language development.

Gilmer got a better center, but in doing so, he lost a couple of parishioners, who were offended

by their conservative Christian pastor's decision to take government money.

He has no regrets.

"I guess you could say we're a fundamentalist-type church getting involved in liberal-type thinking," said the fresh-faced Gilmer, with a chuckle. "But how much involvement will the government have with us? None. Other than health and safety standards, they haven't come in and told us how to do this or that. They leave us alone."

Such is the nature of Smart Start, a \$67 million early childhood initiative that in its two short years of existence has improved training for more than 4,000 child care workers, reduced staff-to-children ratios for infants and toddlers and provided quality improvement grants to nearly 1,000 centers across the state.

It has also spurred unlikely local al-

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A child at the Church of God of Prophecy day care center in Fayetteville, N.C., tries on one of the masks in the mobile costumes trunk provided by Smart Start.

liances between conservatives and liberals, businessmen and nonprofit groups, believers in big government and advocates of little-to-no government.

The story of Smart Start is instructive for Pennsylvania, and not just because it's a model program that has committed unprecedented amounts of state resources to improve child care. It also shows that, given the right conditions, child care can become a defining gubernatorial campaign issue that galvanizes voters.

A governor's push

Smart, smooth-talking, incredibly popular Democrat James Hunt had already built a reputation as a probusiness, anticrime conservative during his first two terms as governor. So when he decided to run for a third term in 1992 — after 10 years in private life — on a child care platform, his opponents could hardly call him a free-spending liberal.

Plus, improving day care was an issue that resonated with North Carolina voters.

The state had been rocked in 1989 by child abuse charges at the Little Rascals day care center in Edenton (the defendants were eventually acquitted).

And four years ago, North Carolina's day care facilities were cited by many experts as among the worst in the nation, thanks to weak regulations. Even today, more than half of the directors of the state's day care centers don't have a high school education.

"We are consistently ranked in the bottom quarter in terms of our regulation of child care," said Dick Clifford, a noted child care researcher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and this year's president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

So when Hunt won the election, he made good on his promise, pushing lawmakers to commit some serious money for Smart Start: \$20 million in the first year and \$47 million in the second.

Elsewhere in the nation, states are eligible for small amounts of federal block grant

money to make quality improvements at day care facilities, and some go further in investing new money in child care and education. Hawaii has a plan to create a universal system of early childhood education and care by 2005; Colorado, Ohio and Illinois are also expanding their early childhood programs for low-income children.

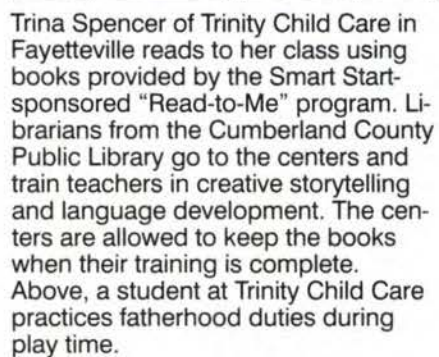
But nothing at the moment compares with North Carolina.

It is "without question the most exciting thing going on in the country right now," said Helen Blank, director of child care at the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C.

Has Smart Start improved the quality of child care since it was enacted in 1993?

It's too soon to tell — officially. Preliminary studies by University of North Carolina researchers show that centers using Smart Start money are more likely to be of good quality, but it's not clear whether that's because of Smart Start or whether the centers were good to begin with, and wanted to get

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better.

More complete data will be available next year to answer that question, said Donna Bryant, director of evaluation for the program at Chapel Hill.

That is, if Smart Start is still alive.

Political uncertainty

The program's future has been in doubt ever since leaders of the first Republican House majority in North Carolina since Reconstruction announced their intention to scale down or eliminate the program.

On its face, Smart Start's philosophy has much that Republicans would seem to admire: local control, public-private partnerships, and most of all, money with few big-government strings attached.

But Raleigh's GOP isn't signing on. Religious conservatives called it "socialized day care" when it was enacted, and many feel it is wrong to use tax money to benefit working parents when households with stay-at-home mothers and a single breadwinner aren't getting any subsidies.

They worry that there is little accountability on how the money is being spent, and that the "public-private partnership" is in fact mostly public.

There have been other problems. In the first year of the program, questions were raised about the purchase of new office furniture in some counties; expensive management consultants; no-bid contracts; and the embezzlement of about \$400,000 in Smart Start money by two subcontractors.

"Republicans are as concerned about children as anybody," said Robin Hayes, House majority leader and gubernatorial hopeful. But, he said, "it is the families' obligation to raise their children, the parents' primary re-

sponsibility, not government's."

Hunt is also using the program to further his own political ambitions — he's running for a fourth term — by awarding new Smart Start grants to "swing" counties during elaborately staged road trips, opponents claim.

Still, business leaders sided with Hunt in the most recent budget battle over Smart Start last summer. When the GOP tacked on a requirement that 20 percent of the money be privately raised, some thought it would be the kiss of death. But Hunt persuaded such corporate giants as NationsBank, Food Lion, Southern National Corp. and Glaxo Wellcome to pledge about \$9.5 million in contributions over 10 years.

The local fund-raising requirement was scaled back to 10 percent, including in-kind contributions, effectively keeping the program alive until the next round of budget negotiations.

The backlash against Smart Start shouldn't be all that surprising, experts say.

"That's the classic cycle" for such programs, said William Gormley of Georgetown University, a political scientist. "First, you give discretion to the recipient government. Then the government makes mistakes, which then spurs an avalanche of criticism, which results in a ratcheting up of restrictions."

"No program has been scrutinized more than Smart Start," said Rosie Bullard, head of Cumberland County's Smart Start program. The very day a reporter visited her office, state auditors were combing through her files. The week before that, the private accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand had been there. Both audits were done at the Legislature's request.

Despite all the political wrangling,

though, Bullard said there's no turning back the clock to North Carolina's once-dismal reputation for day care.

"Smart Start has forced those of us on the local level to put our differences aside and focus on the consensus that our children deserve to be nurtured in a safe, loving and stimulating environment," Bullard said.

"I think we are on our way to becoming known as a community for children, the way Durham [Duke University] is for medicine," she added with pride.

Linda Rivers, director of Cumberland County's United Cerebral Palsy program and a former preschool teacher, remembers the bad old days all too well, including her stint as the sole caregiver for 16 2- and 3-year-olds.

"In two years I never saw a state inspector," she said with a shudder.

But because of tougher new regulations enacted along with Smart Start, even that has changed. The center's day care "consultant" — the state's official term for inspector — is very much in evidence, not just to enforce rules, but for assistance. "I can pick up the phone and call him and say, 'Hey, I've got this problem with my playground. Am I going to be cited for this?' And he'll come out and help me. Now, there's a *relationship*."

Back at the Church of God of Prophecy, pastor Steve Gilmer also takes the long view.

Unlike some fundamentalist ministers, "I don't preach that day care is Satan," he said.

"What is controlling our lives is the fact that some people must work three to four jobs to make ends meet, and they don't have the luxury of staying home with the kids.

"I simply refuse," he added, "to allow liberal and conservative opinions to divide us."

WHO CARES?

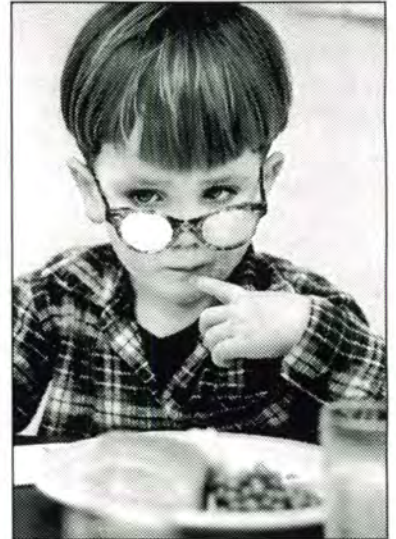
DAY CARE IN AMERICA

Day 8: June 9, 1996

It's time for the parents to march off to work — literally. But military day care at Fort Bragg brings scenes familiar to all who leave their children in day care: The good-byes are always difficult. At right, Staff Sgt. Tracy Long gets a goodbye kiss from his son, Trae, 4.



Nicholas, 3, looks over his lunch at the Prager Child Development Center at Fort Bragg, an Army base outside Fayetteville, N.C. All the food meets USDA guidelines for children's nutritional needs.



Military raises its standards

Day care programs now exemplary

By Mackenzie Carpenter
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

FORT BRAGG, N.C.



we already have socialized day care in America. It's in all 50 states. It's high quality, affordable and serves 155,000 children in 830 centers and 10,000 homes.

And you pay for it.

Want to use it? Sorry. Not unless you're prepared to fight and possibly die for your country.

In the past 15 years, the U.S. military has transformed its scandal-ridden, poor-quality day care into a model program that gives its children what they need.

And it's done it despite the reluctance of Congress or the White House to subsidize day care for anyone else.

At the Fernandez Center on this military base near Fayetteville, N.C., children play in beautifully laid-out rooms, dubbed "modules," with plenty of windows facing the sun.

Toys are plentiful. There are dolls of different ethnicities, and camouflage helmets for fantasy play. A child development specialist is on staff to guide teachers, who are getting extra training themselves.

Perhaps the only whiff of militaristic rigor can be found in the center's activity schedule, which reads like this: "1430 hours-1500 hours: wake up/personal hygiene; 1500-1530: Child Choice in Activity Centers Group 1 ..." and so forth.

The military's day care system exemplifies how mediocre and poor day care can be raised to a level of good quality on a massive scale, as long as there's enough money and someone in charge to say: Do it.

It wasn't always this way.

Twenty years ago, staff turnover rates — one key indicator of poor quality in day care — were as high as 300 percent a year in some military centers, remembers Linda Smith, director of family policy at the Pentagon. Then, as now, military centers had a built-in turnover rate of about 30 to 40 percent, because many of the employees were spouses of active duty personnel who were transferred. But because day care salaries were so low, many others left to take readily available jobs elsewhere on the bases.

In 1982, a report by the General Accounting Office on poor conditions at several military centers prompted some changes, but nothing drastic.

Then, in the late 1980s, day care scandals erupted at the Presidio and West Point, involving charges that workers had molested children. Eventually both cases were dropped because of lack of evidence, but the scandals "shocked the military into action. The scan-

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dals just rocked the Pentagon," said Gail Zelman, an analyst at RAND, which has been tracking the military's efforts to raise quality.

"I can say now, and I couldn't say this six years ago, you tell me where you want to go, and you will see a high quality center," said Smith.

Some key features of the new system:

- Centers are inspected every three months by a team of people, including a parent representative.

- In most of the centers, there are video cameras in the rooms to record interactions between caregivers and children.

- Fees are based on sliding scales, with parents paying between one-third and two-thirds of the cost, ranging from \$35 to \$88 a week.

- Salaries for caregivers are \$7 to \$10 an hour, compared with \$5-\$6 in the private sector.

- To be paid top wages, staffers must complete a two-year training program covering health, safety, child abuse prevention and developmentally appropriate practices, which can be credited toward a degree in child development.

All of this costs the Pentagon about \$204 million a year. Add in military-sponsored family day care homes, and the total military child care bill for fiscal year 1996 was \$269 million.

Can the civilian sector learn something from this?

Zelman is trying to figure that out. A RAND study is expected to be released later this year.

"We would not want to make civilian society like the military," she laughed. Still, one of the things the military did was to order widespread accreditation of these centers, using the standards developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Could such a mandate work in the private sector?

Zelman sighed. Only 4 percent of all civilian day care meets NAEYC's quality requirements, which are expensive and time-consuming to implement, because they require smaller child-to-staff ratios and more training. Such a requirement would be very expensive, and "this is exactly the wrong time" to be seeking federal funds to do it.

And because the military asks so much of its soldiers, "there is more of a sense in the military that it needs to take care of its own people than in a civilian society."

Recalling the scandals that had led to the reforms, she said, "If this sort of child abuse happened in a civilian facility, we might say, 'Oh, that's too bad,' but it wouldn't lead to the kind of concerted action we see in the military."



Nia, 4, doesn't want to let go of her mother, Sgt. Elisha Bertazon, at the base day care center. Two weeks after this picture was taken, Sgt. Bertazon was sent to Tuzla, in Bosnia.

Dads on duty

More fathers are taking on a bigger role with their children

By Sally Kalson
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Tom Holodnik and his wife, Sharon Armstrong, both work full time. But it's Holodnik who wakes up early every morning in their Regent Square home to feed and dress their 15-month-old daughter, Arianne. He packs her bottles and drives her to the Carriage House Children's Center.

By 8:30 a.m., he's at his desk at GALT Technologies. By 5:30 p.m., he's out the door to pick her up. And every night, he works a few hours at home to make up for leaving the office earlier than his colleagues.

Lionel Deimel works at home in Mt. Lebanon as a trouble-shooter for home computers. For the past four years, he's had primary responsibility for his son, Geoffrey, now 14, while his wife, Betty, spent more and more days traveling on business for the Carnegie Mellon University Software Engineering Institute.

The time at home has meant more father-son talks, more pitching practice, and many more hours of collaboration on Geoffrey's computer bulletin board.

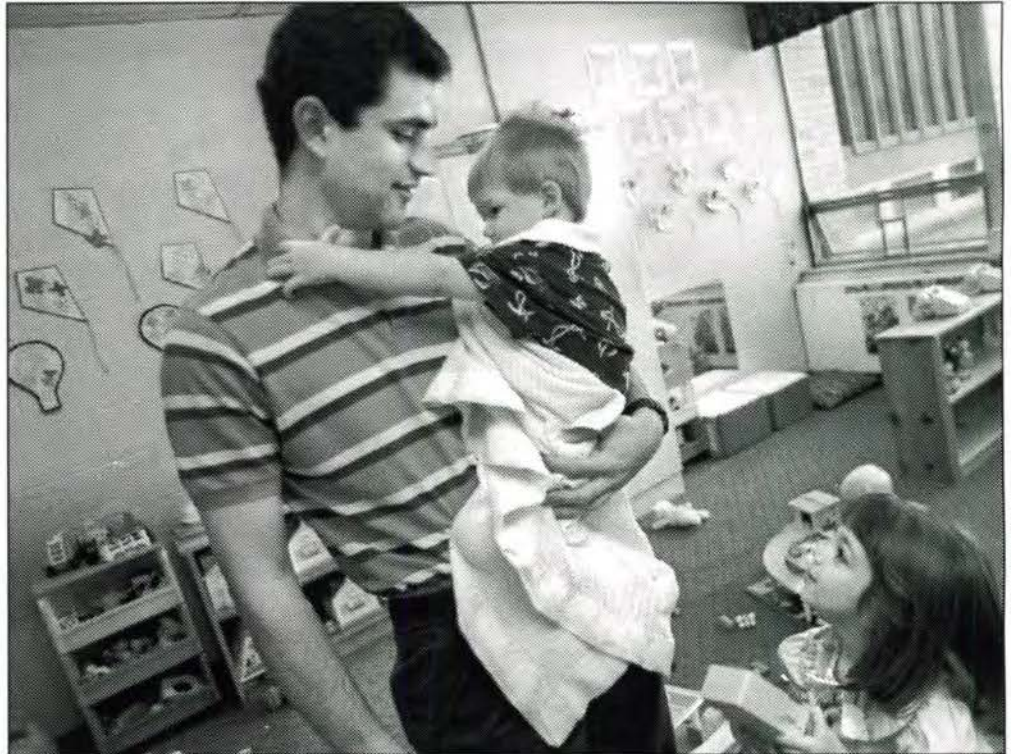
Amro El Jaroudi is a University of Pittsburgh engineering professor. His schedule is more flexible than most. He often makes the runs to the day care center with his daughter, Rasha, 4, and son, Nadim, 1. When the children get sick, he's the one to pick them up — and is usually the only father in the pediatrician's waiting room.

His wife, Wendy Huntoon, attributes her own string of promotions at the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center partly to her husband's enthusiastic fathering.

When fathers get involved in child care, child care gets better — both at home, where many employed moms have reached their breaking point, and at day care, where more parental involvement means better care for children.

Until recently, though, fathers have existed mostly in the margins of child care — by choice, by default, or by social convention.

Deimel, for example, described himself as "clueless" when it came to picking a day



Annie O'Neill/Post-Gazette

Amro El Jaroudi, a University of Pittsburgh engineering professor, is often able to visit his children at the ABC's For Children, a day care center in Green Tree. Here, he holds his son, Nadim, 1, while his daughter, Rasha, 4, looks on.

care center for his son 14 years ago. "My wife did it all," he said. "And to be honest, I saw it as her responsibility. Looking back, I wish I had been more involved."

Deimel is 48. Holodnik and El Jaroudi are in their early 30s. Their ages demonstrate that in some families, a generational shift is taking place, with fathers taking on more of their children's care from the moment of the baby's birth. For many of these men, fatherhood has become as much a part of their identity as their work.

Child care advocates welcome the trend as long overdue. They note, however, that it is still confined primarily to certain segments of society.

Thirty percent of American children are living with one parent, overwhelmingly mom. Many of them are growing up virtually fatherless.

As for couples like those above, all are well-educated and working in high-tech jobs.

For stay-at-home dads — who are still relatively rare — manning the home fires often is due more to employment circumstances than a passionate commitment to child-rearing.

The U.S. Census affirms that.

Stay-at-home dads married to working women shot up from 15 percent in 1988 to 20 percent in 1991. The increase sparked spec-

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ulation of a growing social trend.

But then the father's share dropped back to 16 percent from 1991 to 1993. Looking back, many analysts now think both changes were economic rather than social. The numbers had risen during a recession that left more men unemployed or working part time. They dropped again when the economy improved. Fathers went back to work and the kids went back into day care.

And there's no getting away from the fact that social pressures on fathers and mothers are different.

Most working mothers, for example, are doing less with their children than their own mothers did — often fertile ground for feelings of guilt and self-doubt.

By contrast, whatever fathers are doing is probably more than what their own fathers did — which can be equally fertile ground for feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment.

This helps explain why men rarely wrestle with the same kind of internal conflicts that often plague working women regarding their children's well-being.

"Wendy often asks herself if it's really worth going to work and not being able to see the kids all the time," said El Jaroudi. "I have never asked that question of myself. I don't feel guilty because the day care center is a wonderful place and I see all the positive things the children are getting. She sees the same things, but she still worries."

No wonder there is no *Working Father* magazine to help men juggle jobs and children while reassuring them that their kids will be fine. Not many working dads hold networking luncheons to bolster each others' choices or compare notes on child care centers. And few take up the issue of paternal correctness, debating who's the better father or who cares more about his children based on how many hours he puts in as a wage-earner.

Then there's the question of whether parenting responsibilities will derail a career.

Tom Holodnik doesn't worry about that. He simply puts in the extra hours at night. But his wife worries — not only for herself, but for her husband.

"When you have a position that requires overtime, you get really stressed out because you feel you can't do it," said Sherry Armstrong, a computer consultant at Mellon Bank. "It limits your career potential in corporate America. I struggle with that daily."

"Tom really sees the baby's care as his job. As a woman, I sometimes feel guilty about that, like I should be doing more with her and letting him concentrate more on his career, which probably has more potential than mine."

But Holodnik and Armstrong are probably the exception on this score.



Daniel Marsula/Post-Gazette

Typecasting the dads



Here's how behavioral scientists at Penn State University categorized four different types of fathers, based on how they interacted with their 15-month-old sons and how they answered questions about themselves.

The observations were made at the families' homes during two 90-minute visits around dinner time.

ALL-AROUND fathers feed the children and care for basic needs. They play with them, teach them and also discipline to some extent. They tend to have higher-status jobs and happier marriages.

PLAYMATE fathers primarily play with little ones. Caring for and teaching their babies are a much smaller part of their relationships. They tend to have lower-status jobs and happier marriages, but also report more hassles in the workplace.

DISCIPLINARIAN fathers focus mainly on reacting to rule-breaking. Playing, teaching and caregiving are minimal. But they are still involved parents to some degree. They tend to have lower-status jobs and less happy marriages.

DISENGAGED fathers seem to have no function that characterizes their involvement. Some may spend time with their children, but they don't have sustained interaction. Others aren't involved at all. They tend to have higher-status jobs and to struggle more with depression, anger and tension. They also report less happy marriages.

One sign of that: there has been no massive outcry among fathers for improved child care, paid parental leave or flex time. Because most men are still not the primary parents in their families, flexible work schedules and child care availability are not at the top of their agendas.

In fact, most men still have a long way to go toward full partnership with their wives.

A 1995 report by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement found, not surprisingly, that women remained the primary caretakers of children all over the world.

The study was conducted through interviews with more than 21,000 families in 11 countries.

The responses showed that American mothers — about half of whom hold outside jobs — spent an average of nearly 11 waking hours daily as sole supervisors of their preschoolers.

The fathers' average time — 42 minutes.

How to choose a day care center

Studies show that most parents overestimate the quality of their day care centers. Here is a checklist to use when looking for a center for your child or evaluating the one you have now.

BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Ask to see a center's inspection reports for the last year or two, as well as any verified complaints. The state requires that the most recent report be posted; if it isn't, ask why. These reports won't tell you much about a center's quality, but they will give you an idea of how well a center is complying with health and safety standards. Note, however, that all violations are not the same. If a center is cited for paperwork violations or torn carpet, that's usually not as serious as violating adult-child ratio requirements or using harsh or demeaning language. Also check to see if the kitchen seems clean, if the play areas are safe and orderly, if bathrooms and diaper changing areas seem sanitary. Ask how toys, changing areas and eating areas are disinfected.

ADULT-CHILD RATIO

To ensure high quality care, children need attention. And they won't get that attention if there are too many of them and not enough adults. The state requires that there be one adult for every four infants (birth to 12 months), while the National Association for the Education of Young Children recommends a 1:3 ratio for that age group. State standards also require one adult for every five young toddlers (13 months to 2 years); one adult for every six older toddlers (25 months to 3 years); and one adult for every 10 preschoolers (37 months to entry into first grade). When you walk into a center, count heads. Count how many children and how many adults there are, to make sure they match the ratio requirements. While some experts argue that ratios need to be more flexible in centers with highly trained staffers, it's still one of the best indicators of quality.

GROUP SIZE

It's important that no more than eight babies be in one group at any time, regardless of how many adults there are. There also should be no more than 10 young toddlers, 12 toddlers, or 20 preschoolers in a group. Studies have shown that when group sizes become too big, caregivers spend more time trying to manage behavior than attending to children's individual needs.

APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

There should be lots of different activities available for children in a day care center — art materials, plenty of building blocks, housekeeping toys, puzzles and books. These materials should be appropriate for different age groups.

Babies should have places to crawl and sturdy furniture to pull up on, and should have teethingers, soft toys and action-reaction

toys. Toddlers should have stacking blocks, books, music, puzzles, and sand and water toys. Preschoolers should have bigger play equipment, fingerpaints, costumes and mirrors.

Children are natural scientists. They need opportunities to discover how things work, where things come from and what things are made of. Classrooms should also contain materials that enable them to do that.

Schedules should have some flexibility, and there should be quiet places for those who need time to rest. Watch to see if staffers are at eye level with children, and whether, when kids are being put down for naps, staffers rub their backs and talk softly to them.

STAFF-CHILD INTERACTION

Adults should be positioned around the room, not clustered together talking or watching from afar. Statements should be positive and adults should offer alternatives, such as: "We don't throw blocks here because it will hurt other children, but let's find another way to use the blocks." Corrections should be calm and nonjudgmental. Adults should respond quickly to a distressed child, and should take children outside at least once a day, weather permitting.

TRAINING

The more training a staff has in child development and early childhood education, the better. Check the inspection reports to ensure that staffers at least have received the minimum six hours of annual training required under the law. If they haven't, it will be noted on the report. Ask if they've gone beyond that minimum; if they have, it's a good sign. Directors ideally should have degrees in child development or early childhood education.

TURNOVER

Ask how long the adults have been at the center — including the director, your child's caregiver and other employees. High turnover is considered a negative influence on children's development, and is often a sign of poor working conditions. Child care in general is grossly underpaid, so salaries are not by themselves a sign of a center's quality. But when low pay is combined with such things as overcrowding, unpredictable work hours and lack of respect, then low job satisfaction is going to mean high turnover. And that is a warning sign.

ACCESS

Can you visit the center at any time, or does the caregiver limit your access? Certainly a first-time visit must be scheduled in advance so that the director has time to spend with a parent, but once a child is enrolled, parents should always be welcome.

GUT FEELINGS

Take a good look around. Smell the air, listen to the sounds, look at the children's faces, watch the caregivers and how they behave. Check the menus, and the lesson plans — if there aren't any, ask why not. And then, pay attention to how all of these things make you feel in the pit of your stomach.

Pittsburgh
Post-Gazette

VALUING FAMILIES: The High Cost of Waiting

A Study of Families on the Child Care Sliding Fee Waiting List in Hennepin County, Minneapolis, MN

Just as a small amount of money invested at the right time produces a profitable future return, investing in children through the Child Care Sliding Fee Program ensures short- and long-term dividends for all of us.

Minnesota's 20-year-old Child Care Sliding Fee Program stabilizes the cost of child care and education for parents. By providing a moderate amount of funding based on each family's size and income, it allows low-income parents to work or stay in school while paying a copayment for their child's care and education.

In spite of the value and effectiveness of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program, funding is not available when people need it. In December of 1994, approximately 2,100 Hennepin County families faced a wait of up to one-and-one-half years for assistance.

Believing that such delays are harmful to families, GMDCA surveyed families on Hennepin County's waiting list to determine the economic, emotional, and societal costs of delayed support. The study unearthed five compelling findings that corroborate what we in child care already knew: waiting for child care assistance has a devastating impact on families.

Study Findings

1 Without child care subsidies, one quarter of the families on the waiting list have turned to AFDC for economic survival and one-half rely on food stamps and Medical Assistance. As one parent states:

"I've been on AFDC for six years and I would have preferred free daycare and medical assistance within the first year of my firstborn's life to an AFDC check...I need help, but more importantly I need to show my kids by example how to survive through employment and hard work. All I'm showing them is someone will take care of you...and that every three weeks we only have one to two meals and most and hunger hurts."

2 The short-term cost of supporting families on welfare is \$595 more per month per family than the cost of supporting a similar family with only child care subsidies. The long-term cost of supporting families with welfare also has serious ramifications.

3 Many families have incurred overwhelming debt as a result of their child care expenses. Most parents cannot find free child care. Over 80 percent of families on the waiting list pay for care, and of these families, 71 percent have experienced significant levels of

debt or filed for bankruptcy.

The majority of families surveyed continue to work while waiting for Child Care Sliding Fee, but they do so at great expense to the security of their family. With an average annual income of \$15,400, they struggle to pay child care — which averages \$4,525 a year for a three- or four-year-old or 29 percent of these earnings.

"I pay \$460 a month for child care. I am a single parent and a manager of a restaurant. As a result of day care expenses I try to cut back on hours at work...to reduce the day care amount. My unit then suffers...to the point I worry I may lose my job. I have lost out on bonus money I depend on and have fallen behind on several bills. I am currently looking into claiming bankruptcy."

4 Because of the high cost of care and education, almost half of the parents feel trapped. Some are unable to work, much less pursue training for higher-wage jobs.

"The... financial stress of having small children is almost unbearable. It is an impossible situation when you cannot afford to work because you cannot afford quality child care, but you cannot afford not to work."

5 Many children on the waiting list are deprived of consistent, stable care and appropriate early childhood education. This may result in the inability to form strong, healthy relationships, which are the foundation needed for success in school and life.

Over one-third of parents were concerned about quality issues with their child's provider such as lack of appropriate programming, not enough attention paid to their child and unsafe or unclean environments.

"The babysitter leaves Alicia with her son who is 17 years old and very immature. It bothers me to come and get her and she's crying hysterically and he just ignores her and she's hungry."

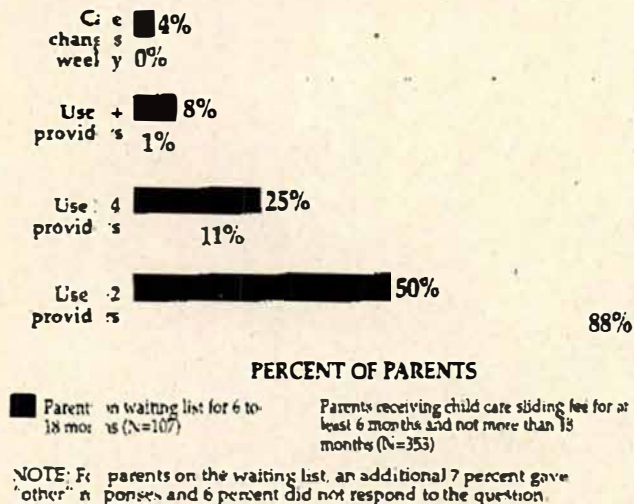
Over one-third of parents changed child care providers three or more times while on the waiting list.

"My child is six months old and has been in three horrible daycares in two-and-one-half months."

"My two babies will be fuller — happier — learning a lot of new interesting things they need to know. Have a chance to meet another children, to talk, to learn how to speak English, to understand the world outside. Right now my two children know nothing about English — afraid outside — afraid with other kids. And I worried about my babies a lot while I'm working because my babies are not full enough, they're not happy and so scared of the lady who take care of them. I am a single mother. My income really not enough to send my to children to day care center. Please help."

— From a mother on the
Child Care Sliding Fee waiting list

Stability of Child Care Arrangements



About GMDCA

As the child care resource and referral agency for Hennepin County, the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association (GMDCA) has worked for 26 years to effect positive change in the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care. In addition, GMDCA seeks to influence the overall Minnesota child care system for the benefit of all children and families.

This study was funded by a grant from the Minneapolis Foundation.

Profile of Families Surveyed

GMDCA surveyed 270 randomly-selected families on the waiting list for Child Care Sliding Fee assistance.

Average family size: 3

Average number of children per family: 1.5

Average annual income: \$15,400

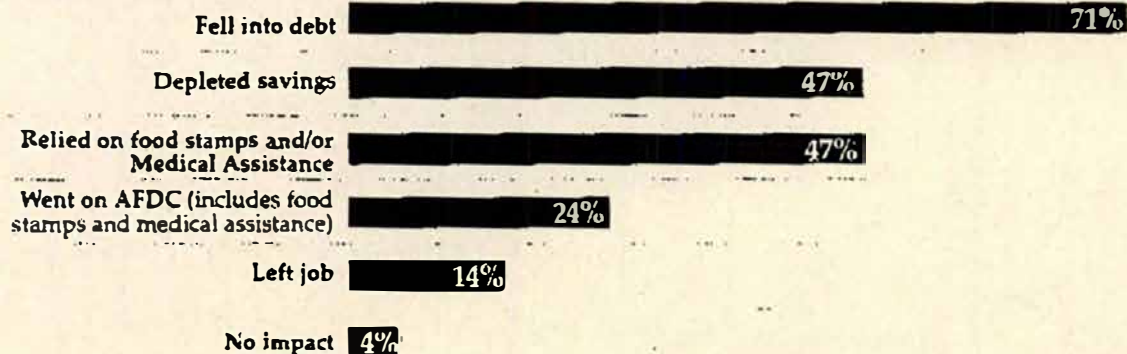
Marital status:

Single parent: 68 percent
Married: 25 percent
Living with other parent: 6 percent
Unknown: 1 percent

Work/School Status

Working: 63 percent
In school: 10 percent
Both working and in school: 11 percent
Looking for work or waiting to get into school: 16 percent

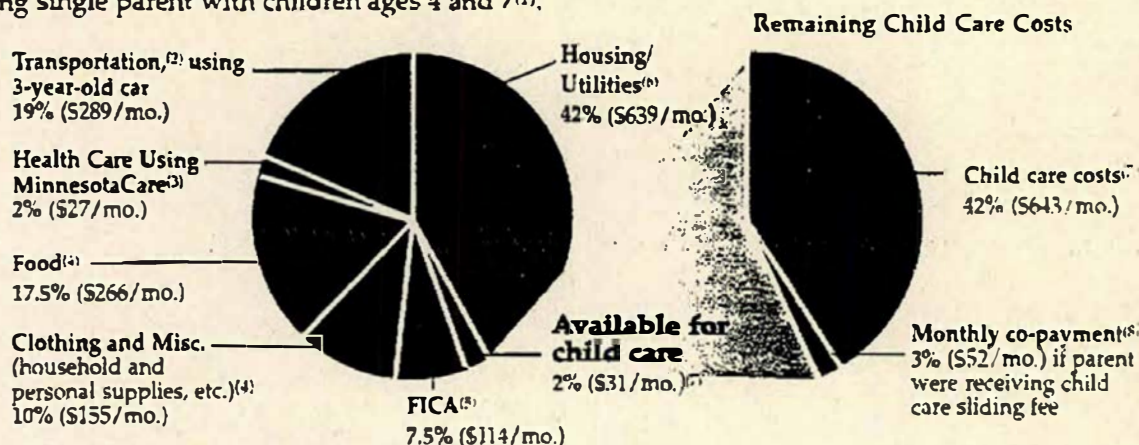
Economic Impact of Child Care Costs on Families on the Waiting List



NOTE: Results do not total to 100 percent due to multiple responses. (N = 270)

No Room for Child Care Costs in Budget of Typical Family on the Waiting List

Monthly budget of \$1,521 (includes food stamps and earned income tax credit) for working single parent with children ages 4 and 7⁽¹⁾.



Notes: Data compiled by Children's Defense Fund MN 1993:

1. Average income of family on the waiting list in Hennepin County, including \$193/month for food stamps and \$70/month for tax credits minus state and federal taxes due.
2. Cost of running a 3-year-old car 12,000 miles/year; from MN Department of Transportation, 1993.
3. Presumes family on MinnesotaCare; higher if parent is covered through employer and must pay share of cost, 1993.
4. From MN Department of Human Services Market Basket Evaluation of AFDC Standard of Need, 1991.
5. Social Security; presumes no income tax withholding.
6. Two-bedroom apartment with utilities and phone; from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. West, 1993.
7. Average cost of family child care for preschool and school age care, 1994.
8. Monthly Child Care Sliding Fee copayment for family of three, 1994. \$591 of total child care costs are subsidized.

Impossible Choices: AFDC or Nothing

Given the high cost of child care, low wage jobs and a long waiting list for Child Care Sliding Fee, how do these families manage? Some don't.

Families on the waiting list soon discover that the fastest way to obtain child care assistance is to quit their jobs, go on AFDC, and then begin work again often at lower paying jobs. How can this be?

Parents and caretakers who enter the child care system through AFDC are, for the most part, eligible for child care assistance if they go to work or school. Parents who are not on AFDC are placed on the Child Care Sliding Fee waiting list. Families transitioning off AFDC are placed at the head of this list,

causing further delays for the low-income, non-AFDC families already waiting for assistance.

We believe the unintended message of the current system is, "Quit your job, go on AFDC, then get another job and you'll receive child care services."

In the end, many families do whatever it takes to survive.

- While waiting for child care funding, 47 percent of families relied on Food Stamp and Medical Assistance Programs.
- Almost one out of four families on the waiting list left jobs or job-related training and turned to AFDC.

Under these circumstances, cutting and capping spending on child protection programs will force state governments to gamble with children's lives: to choose whether to leave maltreatment reports uninvestigated, leave children in unsafe homes with minimal services, cut payments to foster parents, slow down or stop adoptions, cut services for abandoned infants or eliminate prevention and research.

(Example)

In Atlanta, Georgia, Federal child abuse and neglect prevention funds help support programs that provide crisis hotlines and free counseling to young women who have been sexually abused. There are always over 100 women on the waiting list for the counseling because there's no where else that low-income people can get this service. By capping child protection funds, services like these are likely to be lost as states struggle to meet the demand for foster care.

Nutrition:

(see attached anecdotes)

for abuse hotline

100 on waiting list
ATH.

Talking Points Child Care

Key themes

1. Families struggling to become self-sufficient need access to affordable child care in order to participate in education, training and work.

- o Studies indicate that when child care arrangements break down, families are more likely to drop out and go back on welfare.

- o More than 400,000 children each month receive child care assistance through the AFDC and Transitional Child Care guarantees. Assistance for these children and their families is in jeopardy if child care funds are capped. If women are forced to work without adequate child care, their children could be left home alone.

2. Families should not have to go in the welfare line to get child care assistance.

- o Almost one million children of working poor families receive assistance through the At-Risk and Child Care and Development Block Grant Programs. If child care funds are capped, these hard working American families could be cut off and put at-risk for welfare dependency.

- o Millions of other working families are already in need of child care assistance. Low-income families who pay for child care spend more than a quarter of their income on child care expenses. HAO found long waiting lists for child care assistance in 5 out of 6 states they visited. For example they found 40,000 children on the waiting list in Texas and 225,000 children in California.

3. The quality of care is far from adequate. Poor quality care threatens childrens' development. The recent study conducted by economists and child development experts confirms that quality care is related to child outcomes. The vast majority of care in the country was found to be mediocre, with 40 percent of infant care considered poor.

Child Care and the Clinton Administration

- o The President has included increases in child care in every budget submitted to Congress. Furthermore, the Work and Responsibility Act introduced last year included the continuation of the child care guarantees for families moving towards economic independence and an investment of \$1.5 billion for working poor families at-risk for welfare dependency.

o The administration has worked to make programs more consistent and coordinated: proposing new regulations to reduce red tape, improve quality, and give states more flexibility and streamlining child care operations into a single Child Care Bureau.

o The administration has revamped and strengthened technical assistance to the states, territories and tribes to ensure that they have access to the best available information on quality issues, particularly health and safety. In addition, we have launched a National Child Care Information Center for policymakers and the general public.

ESTIMATED REDUCTION IN FEDERAL SPENDING FOR CHILD CARE FROM PROPOSED CHILD CARE BLOCK GRANT
(Numbers in millions)

ESTIMATED REDUCTION IN FEDERAL SPENDING UNDER CHILD CARE BLOCK GRANT USING HHS BUDGET AUTHORITY BASELINE FIGURES	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	5 Year Total
AFDC/JOBS	734	784	829	869	911	4,127
TCC	220	234	248	260	272	1,234
At-Risk	300	300	300	300	300	1,500
CCDBG	1,049	1,049	1,049	1,049	1,049	5,245
Child Devment Associate Scholarships	1	1	1	2	2	7
Dependent Care Planning and Devment Grants	13	14	14	14	15	70
Native Hawaiian Family Centers (CBO est.)	5	5	6	6	6	28
SUBTOTAL HHS BASELINES	2,322	2,387	2,447	2,500	2,555	12,211
CHILD CARE BLOCK GRANT	1,943	1,943	1,943	1,943	1,943	9,715
REDUCED SPENDING FOR CHILD CARE	-379	-444	-504	-557	-612	-2,496
PERCENT REDUCTION IN SPENDING	-16%	-19%	-21%	-22%	-24%	-20.4%

Notes:

1. This Child Care Block Grant freezes funding at the FY1994 levels estimated in CBO's baseline.
2. The numbers above are HHS estimates based on baseline figures from the President's FY1996 budget except for the Native Hawaiian Family Centers estimate which is from the CBO baseline.
3. CBO estimates were based on January 1995 CBO Baseline figures. They estimate five year savings of \$1.7b or a 15 percent reduction in spending. These differ from HHS estimates due to baseline differences.
4. Savings projected by the EEO committee are based on CBO baseline figures.

↓
Total funding losses that would result from implementation of Shaw child care block grant

	LOSS IN FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FROM BLOCK GRANT	REDUCTION IN CHILDREN RECEIVING FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE
ALABAMA	\$11.3	6,970
ALASKA	\$1.5	930
ARIZONA	\$10.3	6,350
ARKANSAS	\$4.6	2,840
CALIFORNIA	\$53.7	33,130
COLORADO	\$6.3	3,890
CONNECTICUT	\$7.0	4,320
DELAWARE	\$1.9	1,170
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$1.8	1,110
FLORIDA	\$25.7	15,850
GEORGIA	\$21.2	13,080
HAWAII	\$2.0	1,230
IDAHO	\$2.4	1,480
ILLINOIS	\$22.1	13,630
INDIANA	\$12.3	7,590
IOWA	\$4.8	2,960
KANSAS	\$6.4	3,950
KENTUCKY	\$10.6	6,540
LOUISIANA	\$11.3	6,970
MAINE	\$2.0	1,230
MARYLAND	\$11.1	6,850
MASSACHUSETTS	\$16.3	10,060
MICHIGAN	\$15.2	9,380
MINNESOTA	\$11.1	6,850
MISSISSIPPI	\$6.6	4,070
MISSOURI	\$12.0	7,400
MONTANA	\$1.9	1,170
NEBRASKA	\$5.0	3,080
NEVADA	\$1.9	1,170
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$2.1	1,300
NEW JERSEY	\$10.5	6,480
NEW MEXICO	\$5.3	3,270
NEW YORK	\$37.0	22,830
NORTH CAROLINA	\$27.7	17,090
NORTH DAKOTA	\$1.5	930
OHIO	\$28.9	17,830
OKLAHOMA	\$11.3	6,970
OREGON	\$8.8	5,430
PENNSYLVANIA	\$24.2	14,930
PUERTO RICO	\$7.7	4,750
RHODE ISLAND	\$2.7	1,670
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$7.9	4,870
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$1.5	930
TENNESSEE	\$16.8	10,360
TEXAS	\$44.4	27,390
UTAH	\$6.8	4,190
VERMONT	\$1.6	990
VIRGINIA	\$11.3	6,970
WASHINGTON	\$16.4	10,120
WEST VIRGINIA	\$4.5	2,780
WISCONSIN	\$10.1	6,230
WYOMING	\$1.4	860
TRIBES	\$18.4	11,350
TERRITORIES	\$3.1	1,910
ALL STATES	\$612.0	377,680
Percent Reduction	24.0%	

Notes:

1. The block grant amount is set at FY1994 CBO Baseline levels.
2. Funds are allocated according to HHS figures on FY1994 expenditures and allocations.
3. FY2000 figures are FY1994 allocations and expenditures adjusted by the national growth rate figures.
4. Children served was determined by dividing total federal allocations and expenditures by an average federal expenditure figure of \$1621. This is not a full-time equivalent.
5. Numbers may not exactly equal national figures due to rounding.

REDUCED FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FOR STATES AND CHILDREN IN FY 2000

This table shows FY 2000 losses in funding and in numbers of children receiving federal assistance under the new child care block grant.

FUNDING LOSS

The funding loss is the difference between the FY 2000 block grant distribution and the expected FY 2000 funding level under current law. FY 2000 funds are distributed according to the proportion of federal child care funds received in FY 1994, as is proposed in the draft EEO bill.

REDUCTION IN CHILDREN RECEIVING FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

The reduction in children is derived from the State's funding loss and the national average child care funding per child. Average funding per child was calculated by dividing the total federal child care funding in FY 1993 by the total number of children served through federal child care programs in that year. This number is not a full-time equivalent cost. It does not contain state or parent contributions to the cost of care. The FY 1993 funding per child was inflated to FY 2000 according to the HHS baseline.



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

FEB 13 1995

The Honorable E. Clay Shaw
Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter expresses the Administration's views on the Chairman's mark for welfare reform legislation under consideration by the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources.

The Administration shares the commitment of the Congress and the American people to real welfare reform that emphasizes work, parental responsibility, state flexibility, and the protection of children. Last year, the President submitted a bold welfare reform bill, the Work and Responsibility Act of 1994, which embodied these values. It imposed tough work requirements while providing opportunities for education, training, child care and supports to working people. It included a stringent set of child support enforcement provisions. It required each teen mother to live at home, stay in school and identify her baby's father. It increased state flexibility without sacrificing accountability. And it maintained a basic structure of protections for children.

The Administration looks forward to working cooperatively with the Congress in a bipartisan way to pass bold welfare reform legislation this year. The Administration has, however, serious concerns about a number of features of the Chairman's mark that appear to undermine the values to which we are all committed. The Administration seeks to end welfare as we know it by promoting work, family and responsibility, not by punishing poor children for their parents' mistakes. Welfare reform will succeed only if it successfully moves people from welfare to work.

Work

For years, Republicans and Democrats alike have agreed that the central goal of welfare reform must be work. That is still our goal: People who can work ought to go to work and earn a paycheck not a welfare check. The Administration believes that no adult who is able to work should receive welfare for an unlimited time without working. The Administration believes that from the first day someone comes onto welfare, he or she should be required to participate in job search, job placement, education, or training needed to move off welfare and into a job quickly. It is government's responsibility to help ensure that the critical job placement, training, and child care services are provided. Individuals who are willing to work should have the opportunity to work and not be arbitrarily cut off assistance.

The Administration therefore has serious concerns about the Chairman's mark before you:

- o It eliminates requirements that recipients participate in job search, education, work or training as a condition of receiving welfare, and ends any responsibility of state welfare systems to provide education, training and placement services to move recipients from welfare to work. The proposed legislation effectively repeals the bipartisan Family Support Act signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1988.
- o The proposed legislation includes only minimal and unenforceable requirements that recipients work. The bill requires only that persons on the rolls for more than 2 years engage in "work activities" loosely defined by the state welfare bureaucracy, rather than a real work requirement. The proposed participation standards are very low. In many ways, the work requirements are even weaker than those in current law.
- o The proposed legislation provides no assurance of child care to recipients who work or are preparing to work—even if a state requires them to participate. It offers no promise of child care for those who leave welfare for work or for those who could avoid falling onto welfare if they had some help with child care. While it repeals provisions of existing law that provide funding for child care, this bill is silent on whether any additional funds will be available for subsidized child care for low income working families.
- o The proposed legislation repeals the current rule that anyone who leaves welfare for work can receive Medicaid for an additional year to ease the transition. This would further reduce health care coverage and make it harder for people to move from welfare to work.
- o The proposed legislation would deny all cash assistance to families that have received assistance for more than five years, even if the adult in the family is unable to find a job or prevented from holding a job because of illness or the need to care for a disabled family member. Children would be seriously jeopardized even if their parents cannot find any work.

The Administration supports an alternative approach that would genuinely transform the welfare system into a transitional system focused on work. It would have strict requirements for recipients to participate in and clear responsibilities for states to provide education, training and placement assistance; it would have serious time limits after which work would be required; it would ensure that children would not be left alone when parents were working by providing assistance for child care; it would put parents to work, not just cut them off; and it would ensure that children can expect support from two parents.

Parental Responsibility

The Administration believes that welfare reform should recognize the responsibility and encourage the involvement of both parents in their children's lives. The Administration considers child support enforcement to be an integral part of welfare reform, particularly because it sends a strong message to young people about the responsibility of both parents to support their children. The Administration was pleased that you had agreed to add child support enforcement to your welfare reform bill, and sorry that your proposals are not yet part of the bill now under consideration. The Administration looks forward to working closely with you on this issue in the coming weeks.

- o The only child support provision included in the Chairman's mark is one that allows states to reduce payments to children for the first 6 months if paternity has not been legally established. This provision seems ineffectual and unfair. Even if a mother fully cooperates by giving detailed information identifying the father and his possible location, and even if the state is diligent in pursuing the father, it can easily take 6 months to get paternity legally established. There is no reason why the child should be punished during this period.

The Administration believes that it makes far more sense to deny benefits entirely to any parent who refuses to identify the father or to cooperate in locating him. However, once the mother has done all she can, the family should qualify for aid, and then the state should establish paternity within one year.

The Administration believes that the welfare system should encourage the formation and support of two-parent families. The Administration is therefore concerned about an important omission in the proposed legislation:

- o The proposed legislation would encourage the break-up of families by repealing the requirement that states provide cash assistance to two-parent families in which a parent is unemployed or unable to work. It allows states to discriminate against married, two-parent families by treating single-parent families better than two-parent families.

The Administration supports an approach that both encourages the formation of two-parent families and makes sure that both parents take responsibility for children in all cases.

Teen Pregnancy

The Administration and the American people agree that the best reform of welfare would be to ensure that people do not need it in the first place. Welfare reform must send a very strong message to young people that they should not get pregnant or father a child until they are ready and able to care for that child, and that if they do have children, they will not be

able to escape the obligations and responsibilities of parenthood. We must be especially concerned about the well-being of the children who are born to young mothers, since they are very likely to grow up poor.

The Administration therefore has serious concerns about the bill before you:

- o The proposed legislation would deny all federal cash benefits for eighteen years to any child born to an unmarried mother under 18, as well as to the parent. This provision appears to punish children for their entire childhood--18 years--for the mistakes of their parents.
- o The proposed legislation does not require that teen mothers live at home, stay in school, and identify the child's father. It weakens requirements in current law, and may make the prospects for mother and child even worse.
- o The proposed legislation establishes only minimal expectations for states to provide services to unmarried parents, and provides no additional funds to support them.

The Administration supports an alternative approach that would require minor mothers to live at home, stay in school, make progress toward self-sufficiency, and identify the father of the child. The Administration also supports a national campaign to prevent teen pregnancy. It is time to enlist parents and civic, religious, and business leaders in a community based strategy to send a clear message about abstinence and responsible parenting. The Administration also supports a state option not to increase benefits for children born to mothers on welfare. This decision should be made by the state, not the federal government.

State Flexibility with Accountability

The Administration embraces the creativity and responsiveness of states, and the opportunities for real reform when states have the flexibility to design and administer welfare programs tailored to their unique circumstances and needs. Already this Administration has granted waivers to nearly half the states for welfare reform demonstrations. National welfare reform should embody the values of work and responsibility in a way that assures taxpayers that federal money is being spent prudently and appropriately. For reform to succeed, the funding mechanisms for welfare should not put children or states at risk in times of recession, population increase or unpredictable growth in demand.

In this context, the Administration has serious concerns about the proposed legislation:

- o The spending cap in the proposed legislation makes no allowances for potential growth in the need for cash assistance because of economic downturn, population growth, or unpredictable emergencies. It could result in states

running out of money before the end of the year, and thus having to turn away working families who hit a "bump in the road" and apply for short-term assistance. It could preclude states from investing in job placement, in work programs, in education and training, and in supports for working families.

- o The proposed legislation removes the requirement that states match federal funds with their own state funds. With none of their own money at risk, states will have many fewer incentives to spend the funds efficiently and effectively to improve performance and increase self-sufficiency.
- o The proposed legislation provides virtually no accountability. There are no incentives for good performance and virtually no penalties for failure. There is no provision for the recovery of monies paid out fraudulently or in error. There are no mechanisms for ensuring that states are actually spending the money on needy children rather than on state bureaucracies, or for monitoring whether federal money is being used to help parents gain self-sufficiency, require work, and enforce parental responsibility. Indeed, the federal government is forbidden from taking any meaningful steps to ensure program performance and accountability.

The Administration supports proposals that significantly increase state flexibility but also ensure accountability for achieving national goals. The Administration supports a funding mechanism that will not put children and states at risk down the road, and that enables states to succeed in moving people from welfare to work and in supporting working families. The Administration has significant doubts about the ability of a pure block grant funding mechanism to adequately protect both children and states.

Protection of Children

The Administration recognizes that the protection of children is the primary goal both of cash assistance programs and of child welfare and child protective services. Cash assistance programs assist families to care for children in their own homes. Child protection services help those children who are abused or neglected or at risk of abuse by their parents and who need special in-home services or out of home placements to assure their safety. Strengthening families, and where appropriate, preventing removal of children from their homes also are, key goals of child protection services. There are problems in a number of areas.

Denial of Benefits to Children on AFDC

The legislative proposals that would reform cash assistance have a number of provisions that would put vulnerable children at greater risk.

- o As noted above, the legislation would deny cash assistance to children of unmarried minor mothers for their entire childhood, to children born while the parent was on welfare, and to children whose parent had received welfare for more than five years, whether or not a job was available or the parent was unable to work. The funding caps could have the effect of denying cash assistance to children when states used up their allocated funds, for whatever reasons. Children in low income working families, who may be forced onto cash assistance in times of economic downturn, could be most affected.

Child Protection Services

Some of these children could well come into a system of child protection services that is already seriously overburdened and that is failing to provide the most essential services. Reported child maltreatment and out-of-home placements have both been increasing sharply. Many state systems are in such distress that they have been placed under judicial oversight. The proposed legislation responds to these increasingly serious problems by consolidating existing programs that protect children into a block grant with nominal federal oversight. The Administration has serious concerns about this approach.

- o The proposed legislation caps spending for child protection programs at a level considerably lower than baseline projections. This could lead to uninvestigated maltreatment reports, and to children being left in unsafe homes with minimal services. It could also seriously hamper states' efforts to improve their child abuse prevention and child protection systems.
- o The proposed legislation eliminates the adoption assistance programs, and leaves it up to states whether they will significantly sustain the subsidies that enable many special needs children to find permanent homes, and whether they will honor commitments to those adoptive families that now receive subsidies.
- o The proposed legislation virtually eliminates federal monitoring and accountability mechanisms. It makes it impossible for the federal government to ensure the protection of children.
- o The proposed legislation is silent on the formula for allocating funds to the states. Because of serious imbalances among the states in spending on child protection, it is hard to imagine a formula that would not disadvantage either states that have been heavy spenders, or states that are only beginning to improve their systems.

Substantial improvements need to be made in the child protection system and in the federal role in overseeing that system. The Administration supports a careful and thoughtful review of the programs before actions are taken that might seriously harm millions of vulnerable children.

Denial of Benefits to Disabled Children on SSI

The Administration is deeply troubled by the changes proposed in the program designed to help disabled children--SSI.

- o The proposed legislation essentially eliminates SSI benefits for children, with the exception of a small group of children currently receiving benefits. Within 6 months, over one hundred thousand disabled children would lose eligibility for SSI benefits--some would lose medical protection as well. And in the future, no child, no matter how disabled, will be eligible for any cash benefits for SSI, except if cash benefits prevent them from having to be institutionalized. These proposals appear to penalize parents who are determined to care for their child no matter what the economic consequences for the family. SSI recipients are among the neediest and most vulnerable children, in the poorest families.
- o Some of the money saved is put into a new block grant for services to disabled children, which would require the creation of a new state bureaucracy to decide on appropriate services. This idea is untested, and no one knows what impact it will have on the most vulnerable of children and the parents who care for them. The 5-year cut off in AFDC for all persons along with the elimination of SSI cash for disabled children may leave these children extremely vulnerable.

The Administration sees the need for careful reform in this area, with its potential for serious harm to extremely vulnerable children. Last year the Congress established a Commission on Childhood Disability to look into these issues in consultation with experts from the National Academy of Sciences. The Commission will provide its report to the Congress later this year. The Administration believes prudence dictates waiting for this short time until this bipartisan commission, following a thorough review of all aspects of this important program, has an opportunity to make recommendations.

Benefits to Legal Immigrants

The Administration strongly believes that illegal aliens should not be eligible for government welfare support. But the blanket prohibition of all benefits to legal immigrants who are not yet citizens is too broad, and would shift substantial burdens to state and local taxpayers. These legal immigrants are required to pay taxes. Many serve in the armed forces, and contribute to their communities. The Administration strongly favors a more focused approach of holding sponsors accountable for those they bring into this country and making the sponsors' commitment of support a legally binding contract.

In summary, the Chairman's mark espouses goals for the reform of welfare--work, parental responsibility, prevention of teen pregnancy and state flexibility--that the Administration and the American people share. But the translation of general goals into specific legislation misses the mark in fundamental ways. The proposed legislation does not represent serious work-based reform. It does nothing to move people from welfare to work, and it does not require everyone who can work go to work. It neither holds state bureaucracies accountable nor cushions state taxpayers against recession. It puts millions of children at risk of serious harm. There are alternative approaches to reform that achieve our mutual goals in far more constructive and accountable ways.

The Administration reiterates its commitment to real welfare reform and its desire to work cooperatively with Congress to achieve it.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the transmittal of this report to Congress.

A similar letter was sent to Representative Harold E. Ford.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. E. Shalala", written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donna E. Shalala

c: Members of the Subcommittee on Human Resources



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

FEB 22 1995

The Honorable William F. Goodling
Chairman
Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter expresses the Administration's views on the Chairman's mark for child care consolidation and the repeal of several child welfare programs under consideration by the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities.

The Administration believes that both child care and child welfare are important issues for American families, and both issues have a distinguished bipartisan history in the Congress and in this Committee. Child care is of significance to millions of working parents and their children, as well as to those families who are trying to gain a foothold in the labor market. Child welfare services assist millions of our most vulnerable children and families in this Nation each year, often in times of crisis.

The Administration looks forward to working cooperatively with the Congress to pass bipartisan child care legislation and to reform and strengthen the child welfare system. The Administration has, however, serious concerns that a number of the features of the Chairman's mark would undermine the values of work and family to which we are all committed, and might undermine the economic independence of families and the safety and well-being of children.

Child Care

The Administration believes that quality child care is an important component of a welfare reform strategy that is truly about work. Successful child care policy promotes the economic independence of families and children's healthy development; provides parents with real choices among quality alternatives for children of all ages; and encourages continuity of care for the child, regardless of changes in the parent's employment.

Last year, the President submitted a bold welfare reform bill, the Work and Responsibility Act of 1994, which embodied these values. It continued the assurance of child care as families move toward self-sufficiency, and made important new investments in child care for working poor families. At the same time, it extended health, safety, and quality provisions to all the major federal child care programs.

These important supports that enable parents to work and to ensure children's safe and healthy development appear to be missing from the Chairman's mark before you. Therefore,

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the Administration has a number of concerns

- o The proposed legislation provides no assurance of child care to AFDC recipients who work or are preparing to work – even if a state requires them to participate in work or training. We should and must require all parents to become active and productive workers. And at the same time, we should assist them in their efforts to care for their children so that their children are not left home alone or in unsafe situations.
- o The proposed legislation may require states to choose between serving families making the transition from welfare to work and working families that need child care assistance to keep them from falling onto welfare. With a cap on total funding for child care far below projected spending under current law, and no separate guaranteed source of child care assistance for welfare recipients, the legislation could conceivably reduce assistance by limiting availability to only approximately 200,000 of the million children of hard working American families by FY 2000 currently receiving federal child care support. The Administration believes that we should support working families and that families should not have to go on welfare to receive child care assistance. Moreover, as demonstrated by the waiver applications the Department has received, states which are committed to making AFDC recipients work view child care as an indispensable tool in their efforts.
- o The proposed legislation repeals provisions for children's health and safety contained in the Child Care and Development Block Grant. These provisions were passed with bipartisan support in Congress and signed into law by President Bush after an extensive national debate. They represent a carefully crafted balance between state flexibility and the national interest in children's safety and healthy development. The provisions do not specify any standards at the federal level but instead require that states have such standards in three areas: control of infectious diseases, physical premises safety, and provider training. A study released in the last few weeks reported that most child care is far from adequate and that 40 percent of infant-toddler centers provide poor quality care. We believe that the proposed legislation could increase risks to children's basic health and safety.
- o The proposed legislation also repeals the provision in the Child Care and Development Block Grant that provides resources for quality care, as well as early childhood, before-school and after-school programs. This provision has been instrumental in ensuring that parents have choices among quality alternatives for their children. States have used these resources to build the supply of quality care, provide critical consumer education to parents, improve licensing and monitoring, and increase the training and supports to child care providers. The repeal of this provision raises concerns.

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The Administration supports an approach to child care that genuinely supports work for parents, and safety and healthy development for children. Such an approach would assume child care for families moving toward self-sufficiency and expand child care opportunities for working families who want to avoid welfare dependency. We believe that ensuring quality choices for parents, and providing for continuity of services for children and families, should be an element of such a proposal.

Child Welfare.

Children become part of the child welfare system because they have been abused or neglected or are in danger of abuse or neglect. The Administration has serious concerns, expressed in the letter to Ways and Means Subcommittee Chairman Clay Shaw and Ranking Member Harold Ford last week, about the proposed block grant approach to child protection. There is unanimous agreement that the system for serving abused and neglected children and their families is seriously overburdened and unable to respond adequately to the needs of children today. The block grant approach potentially endangers the safety of these children by reducing funds for services and for foster and adoptive homes, eliminating critical protections for their well-being, and potentially halting progress in states that are moving forward on the reforms that are needed in this system.

The proposed legislation consolidates existing programs into a block grant with nominal federal oversight and reduces resources significantly from the current services baseline. The Administration has serious concerns about these provisions. First, the proposed legislation caps spending for child protection at \$5.6 billion less than projected baseline spending over 5 years. This cut could force states to gamble with children's well-being -- choosing whether to: leave maltreatment reports uninvestigated, leave children in unsafe homes with minimal services, cut payments to foster parents, or eliminate prevention. Second, the proposed legislation virtually eliminates federal monitoring and accountability mechanisms and also eliminates federal support for research, training, technical assistance, and demonstration projects. It would be virtually impossible for the Federal Government to assure the safety of children or help states improve their systems.

The Chairman's mark repeals the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Adoption Opportunities Program, the Crisis Nurseries Act, the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and the Family Support Centers program under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The activities authorized under these programs would be permitted but not required under the Child Protection Block Grant approved by the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources.

In addition to general concerns about the block granting of child protection funds, the Administration has several specific concerns about the proposed repeal of programs within the jurisdiction of your Committee.

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- o The proposed legislation repeals the Adoption Opportunities program and eliminates the Adoption Assistance program, leaving it up to states whether they can afford the subsidies that enable many special needs children to find permanent homes. These repeals could slow the progress that has been made on adoptions since 1988.
- o The legislation repeals the Abandoned Infants program, which was established to respond to the continuing crises of AIDS and crack cocaine. These crises have disproportionate effects on families and child welfare systems in selected urban areas.
- o The proposed legislation eliminates all direct federal support for non-profit agencies, community-based organizations and public-private partnerships, such as Children's Trust Funds, as well as all earmarked support for prevention of child abuse and neglect.

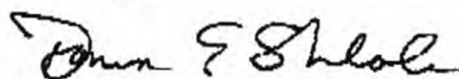
The Administration is committed to improving the child welfare system. The system must ensure the safety of children and strengthen the capacity of parents to nurture healthy children. Given the critical nature of these services, the Administration supports an approach to change that provides states and communities with flexibility to develop services that are responsive to the needs of their citizens, but within the context of a national framework that maintains a commitment to federal resources, and strong, effective protections for children and families.

In summary, the Administration looks forward to working with the Committee in a bipartisan fashion to promote two key goals: work for families and safety and healthy development for children. But we are concerned that the proposed legislation does not move toward these goals. It does nothing to provide child care that would move families from welfare to work, and it risks moving families who are now working back onto welfare as they lose child care assistance. It weakens protections for children's safety in child care, and gambles with their well-being if they are abused or neglected. It neither holds state bureaucracies accountable nor cushions state taxpayers against recession or growing family needs. We believe there are alternative approaches to reform that achieve our mutual goals in far more constructive and accountable ways.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the transmittal of this report to Congress.

A similar letter also was sent to Representative William Clay and members of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities.

Sincerely,



Donna E. Shalala



FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
370 L'ENFANT PROMENADE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20447
February 23, 1995

TO: *Lissa Muscatine*

Telephone:

Fax:

Number of Pages (excluding cover):

337-0589

6

FROM:

Ann Rosewater

Wendy Jacobson
Special Assistant to the
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Telephone:

Fax:

(202) 260-1853

(202) 401-4678

MESSAGE:

*Additional talking points on
Child Welfare proposal +
eliminating the IV-E entitlement.*

Talking Points on Shaw Child Protection Block Grant

- The proposed Child Protection Block Grant will not protect children in crisis nor reform the child welfare system. The amount of the block grant is set at \$4.1 billion in FY96 compared with \$4.75 billion that would have been available if current programs were continued. Over five years, \$5.6 billion of federal funding for state child protection systems will be lost.
- The child protection system today is overburdened and unable to respond adequately to the needs of children. Nearly 3 million children - over 4% of America's children - were the subjects of abuse and neglect reports in 1993, a nearly 25% increase from 1988; 40% of the reports were substantiated, affecting 1 million children. Over one thousand children die each year from maltreatment.

During that same period, foster care caseloads increased by almost 50%, reaching 440,000 children in foster care at the end of 1993. Close to 25% of children entering foster care are under age one, and many were exposed to drugs prenatally.

- Capping foster care and adoption assistance payments eliminates a critical safety valve for the states. State laws appropriately require courts to place children in foster care when they will not be safe at home, and placement is affected by many unpredictable factors such as population growth and poverty, economic dislocation, parental drug use and the numbers of abused and neglected children being identified.

Other parts of the Personal Responsibility Act, which reduce funds for AFDC, SSI and other programs that provide basic support to society's vulnerable children, may also increase the numbers of children needing protection and state care.

- ♦ Eliminating adoption assistance payments and including them in a capped block grant could lead to sharp cutbacks in efforts to recruit adoptive parents and place children in adoptive homes.
- The proposed use of a funding formula which allocates funds to states based on past claims of Federal dollars severely disadvantages States that have growing needs or that are only beginning to reform and improve their systems. Given limited resources and burgeoning need for protective intervention and foster care, few resources will be available for critical services that promote improved outcomes for children: community-based prevention and permanency.

- ♦ Under this proposal, more states may come under court supervision of their child protection systems. In the past few years, courts in 22 states and the District of Columbia have found that the child welfare system violates state and federal laws for protecting abused and neglected children. Courts have found that many reports of child abuse are not investigated, children in foster care lack case plans and in some instances even have no caseworker, children are not provided with basic care and children under agency care continue to be abused both at home or in foster care.
- The proposal virtually eliminates Federal accountability and enforcement mechanisms. Local citizen review boards authorized in the bill have no enforcement powers and the bill specifically prohibits federal enforcement of any provisions of the Block Grant that relate to protecting children, even if a state is not complying with any of the activities it certified it would carry out.

Eliminating The IV-E Entitlement Will Greatly Increase Risk To Children And Prevent System Reform

In 1993, 3,000,000 children, more than 3% of America's children, were reported as abused or neglected. Nearly half a million children were living in foster care because they could not be cared for in their own homes. Between 1988 and 1993 the rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect rose by more than 25% and the number of children in foster care increased by almost 50%. There is unanimous agreement that the current child welfare system is unable to respond adequately to the needs of these vulnerable children. While many states have substantially improved their child protection systems since the passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, in many states the response to the often life-threatening conditions in many young victims lives still is unorganized, underfunded, and completely inadequate, as evidenced by the fact that over 20 percent of the states are under court orders to correct major inadequacies in their child welfare systems. Courts have found that states do not respond promptly to abuse reports, child protection workers have excessively high caseloads, in some instances children do not even have caseworkers. Most troubling, children under agency care continue to be abused, both at home and in foster care.

In order to deal with this crisis, states need adequate resources to investigate reports of abuse promptly, so that children do not remain in life-threatening situations. They need services for parents and children that would enable more children to remain safely in their own homes. They need resources to provide treatment for children in foster care who have substantial emotional problems and educational needs. And they need funds for programs that help prevent child abuse, since help should not be available only after a child has suffered from abuse or neglect.

States already lack adequate resources to accomplish these goals. Ending the state entitlement to IV-E maintenance and administration and placing the IV-E program into the block grant would greatly exacerbate this already bad situation. Under the block grant approach, it is estimated that by the year 2000 a third less funds will be available to states. Many states will be forced to make untenable choices regarding which programs to cut.

While a block grant theoretically allows states to allocate funds among different programs, in fact a state may not be able to control its foster care costs. State laws appropriately require the placement of children into foster care when they will not be safe at home. The number of children who need such care is, to a large degree, unpredictable. Unless there is a dramatic decline in the number and seriousness of abuse and neglect reports, something no one envisions, foster care maintenance payments will

- 2 -

continue to grow. They will consume a larger and larger share of the available monies in the block.

As a result, less funds will be available to support other critical activities: investigation of reports of abuse or neglect, provision of services to maintain children in their homes, subsidization of the adoption of children who need new families, and prevention activities.

The loss of prevention programs and family support\ family preservation programs will mean that more children will be abused or neglected. This will put even more demands on the foster care system. In order to maintain funding for such programs, states would be forced to leave children in life-threatening situations.

It has been argued that block granting will free-up funds now spent on unnecessary bureaucratic tasks to meet federal requirements. But as the Deputy Director of New Jersey's Department of Human services recently testified before Congress, "the potential for achieving economies under a block grant while maintaining the current level of child welfare services would be minimal at best."

- 3 -

Issue 3. Without Some Level of Federal Enforcement of Basic Protections Many States Will Not Improve Their Systems. Citizen Review Panels Are Not A Substitute For A Federal Role.

Questions:

- * Virtually every witness who testified before this Committee, including all of the current and former state and local officials, indicated that a strong, but modified, federal role, was needed to make the state systems work. Why have you chosen to totally ignore their wisdom and eliminate the federal role?
- * What are the specific regulations you consider are inappropriate for federal enforcement and have repealed?
- * Because of the failures of state and federal enforcement of existing laws, many state welfare systems are now under court supervision. Your proposal provides no means of enforcement of federal law, other than through lawsuits? How can you so severely reduce the protections guaranteed to the nation's most vulnerable children foster care when these systems are so clearly in need of supervision?
- * Do you favor a system which entails substantial court supervision of these systems?
- * Your citizen review panels would have no authority to make states comply with federal standards. Isn't it totally irresponsible of Congress to eliminate all federal enforcement of its laws, in light of the extensive evidence of non-compliance with both state and federal laws?
- * In a recent investigation, the Inspector General found 253 health and safety violations in 116 randomly selected foster care facilities in 5 states. These included violations of fire codes and unsanitary conditions. If a parent or a foster care review board member found gross violations that threatened children's health and safety, would your legislation forbid the Secretary from investigating?
- * Just recently the state of Utah entered into a consent decree in a lawsuit challenging the adequacy of its child welfare system. It agreed to make massive changes in the system. Yet according to an editorial

- 4 -

in the Salt Lake Tribune praising the lawyers who brought the suit "before the lawsuit was brought at least a half-dozen studies of the state's child welfare system had reported on the system's inadequacies" including audits by the Department and reports by a citizen advocacy group. Shouldn't we learn from this that federal protections must be made meaningful, not abandoned?

Talking Points Child Care

Key themes

1. Families struggling to become self-sufficient need access to affordable child care in order to participate in education, training and work.

- o Studies indicate that when child care arrangements break down, families are more likely to drop out and go back on welfare.

- o More than 400,000 children each month receive child care assistance through the AFDC and Transitional Child Care guarantees. Assistance for these children and their families is in jeopardy if child care funds are capped. If women are forced to work without adequate child care, their children could be left home alone.

2. Families should not have to go in the welfare line to get child care assistance.

- o Almost one million children of working poor families receive assistance through the At-Risk and Child Care and Development Block Grant Programs. If child care funds are capped, these hard working American families could be cut off and put at-risk for welfare dependency.

- o Millions of other working families are already in need of child care assistance. Low-income families who pay for child care spend more than a quarter of their income on child care expenses. GAO found long waiting lists for child care assistance in 5 out of 6 states they visited. For example they found 40,000 children on the waiting list in Texas and 225,000 children in California.

3. The quality of care is far from adequate. Poor quality care threatens childrens' development. The recent study conducted by economists and child development experts confirms that quality care is related to child outcomes. The vast majority of care in the country was found to be mediocre, with 40 percent of infant care considered poor.

Child Care and the Clinton Administration

- o The President has included increases in child care in every budget submitted to Congress. Furthermore, the Work and Responsibility Act introduced last year included the continuation of the child care guarantees for families moving towards economic independence and an investment of \$1.5 billion for working poor families at-risk for welfare dependency.

o The administration has worked to make programs more consistent and coordinated: proposing new regulations to reduce red tape, improve quality, and give states more flexibility and streamlining child care operations into a single Child Care Bureau.

o The administration has revamped and strengthened technical assistance to the states, territories and tribes to ensure that they have access to the best available information on quality issues, particularly health and safety. In addition, we have launched a National Child Care Information Center for policymakers and the general public.

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

ACF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Child care programs provide important assistance to working families and families who are moving toward self-sufficiency by participating in education and training programs. The Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) child care programs are administered by the Child Care Bureau within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. The overwhelming majority of the children served are from working poor families. Through ACF child care, parents can choose the kind of care best suited to their families' needs.

Child care assistance is available through the states in the following programs:

- Child Care for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Recipients
- Transitional Child Care (TCC)
- At-Risk Child Care (ARCC)
- Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

The first three are title IV-A child care programs, named after title IV-A of the Social Security Act which was amended by the Family Support Act of 1988 to provide for AFDC child care and TCC. Title IV-A was further amended by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 to provide for At-Risk Child Care. The Child Care and Development Block Grant is a separate program created under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990.

Basic Facts about Federal Child Care Funding

Child Care for AFDC recipients entitles AFDC families with child care to the extent that it is necessary for employment or state-approved education and training. AFDC families who are working or in state-approved education or training programs, including the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program, receive AFDC Child Care. This financial support allows them to pursue activities which will help them to become economically self-sufficient.



Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20447
Phone: (202) 401-9215 \ January 1995

Basic facts (cont.)...

Transitional Child Care provides up to 12 months of child care to working AFDC recipients upon loss of eligibility for AFDC due to increase in hours of or earnings from employment. TCC is funded as an entitlement program for those eligible and is critical to maintaining self-sufficiency.

At-Risk Child Care provides child care to low-income working families not receiving AFDC who need child care in order to work and who would be at risk of becoming dependent on AFDC if they did not receive child care assistance.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant funds state efforts to provide quality child care services for low-income family members who work, train for work, or attend school, or whose children are receiving or need to receive protective services. CCDBG provides states, Indian tribes, and territories with funding to help low-income families access quality child care for their children. In addition, CCDBG increases the availability of early childhood development and before- and after-school care services. Funds are available to provide certificates, grants, and contracts for child care services for low-income families. Nationwide, in FY 1993, 65 percent of children were served with certificates.

What the Numbers Show for FY 1993

Q. What was federal spending on child care in FY 1993?

In FY 1993, states, the District of Columbia, and territories received the following IV-A child care funds:

AFDC child care:	\$470.4 million
TCC:	\$112.7 million
ARCC:	\$269.8 million

In FY 1993, 261 grantees, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, Palau, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and 213 Indian tribes received:

CCDBG:	\$890.6 million
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State matching funds are required for AFDC child care, Transitional Child Care, and At-Risk Child Care at the FMAP rate for program funds. Matching requirements ensure that states and territories will receive a certain level of funding if they contribute a specified amount. The Child Care Development Block Grant is a discretionary program requiring no match.

Child Care Numbers (cont.)...

Q. How many children were served by these child care programs in FY 1993?

FY 1993 average number of children served:

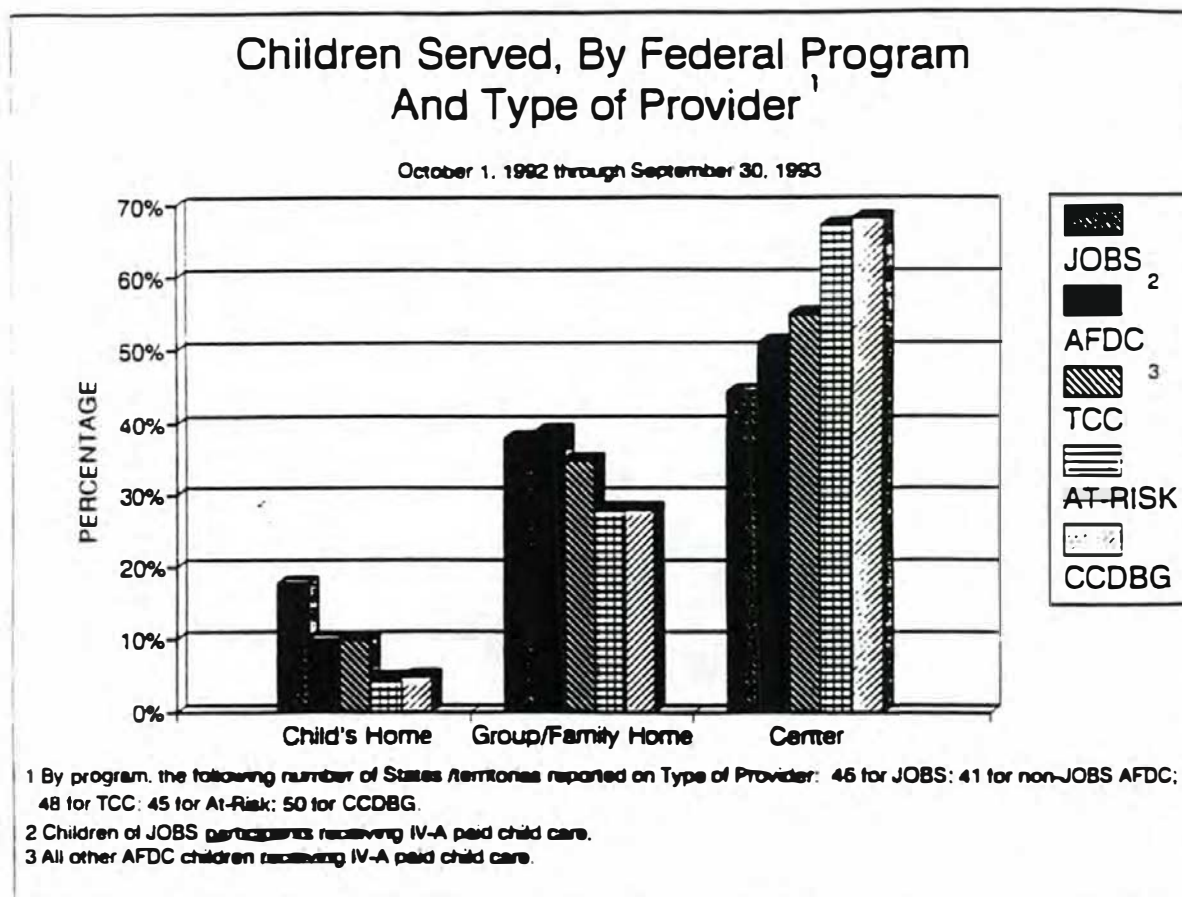
AFDC/JOBS	201,389/month
non-JOBS AFDC	137,855/month
TCC	84,682/month
ARCC	219,017/month

CCDBG (funded some portion of care for): 755,904/year

NOTE: Weekly hours or number of months for which child care was provided varied according to family need.

Q. What types of child care did parents choose for their children?

Parents choose a wide variety of child care arrangements. In FY 1993, the child care arrangement most frequently chosen by parents receiving title IV-A and CCDBG funds was center-based care. The next most frequently chosen arrangement was family day care home or group home followed by child care provided in the child's own home.



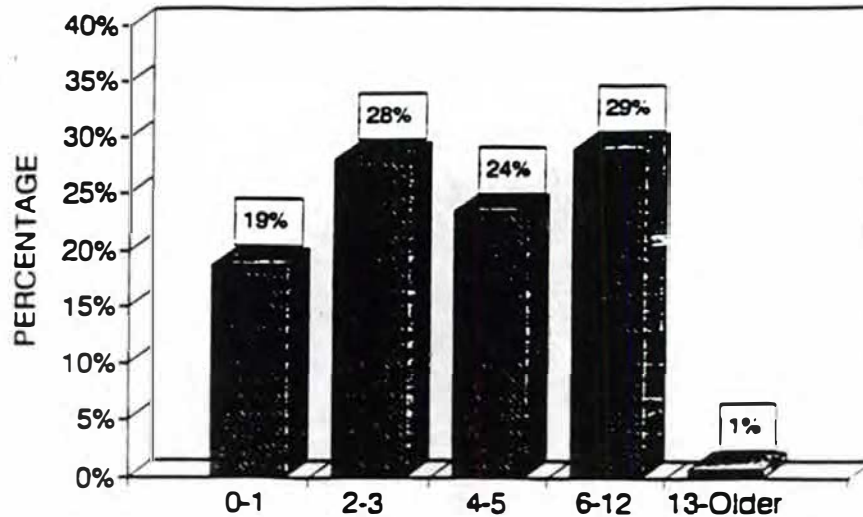
Child Care Numbers (cont.)...

Q. What were the ages of the children in these programs?

FY 1993 age data are available only for children of AFDC/JOBS participants and children in CCDBG-funded care. The majority of children served by both programs are under age 6.

Children of JOBS Participants Receiving IV-A Paid Child Care, By Age

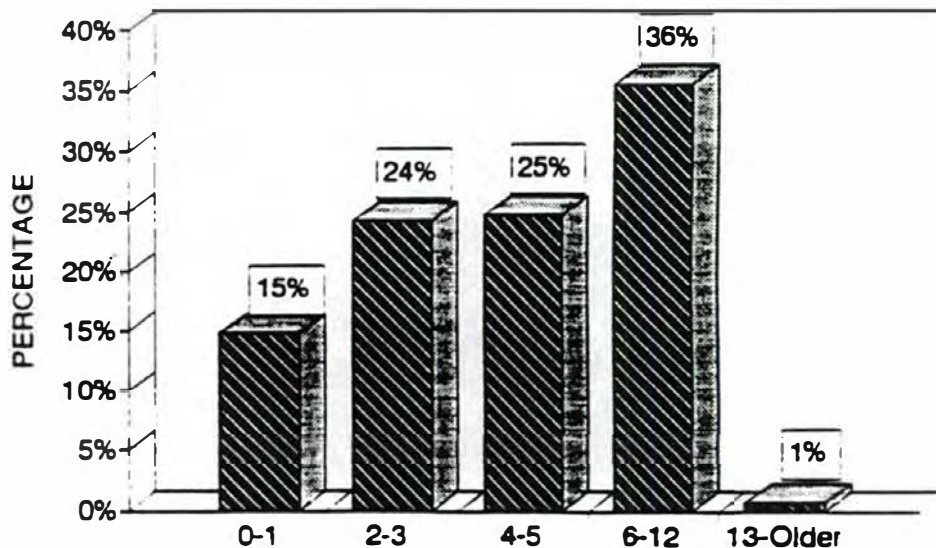
October 1, 1992 through September 30, 1993



Based on reporting by 43 States, the District of Columbia, and territories of Guam and Puerto Rico

Children Served with CCDBG Funds, By Age

October 1, 1992 through September 30, 1993

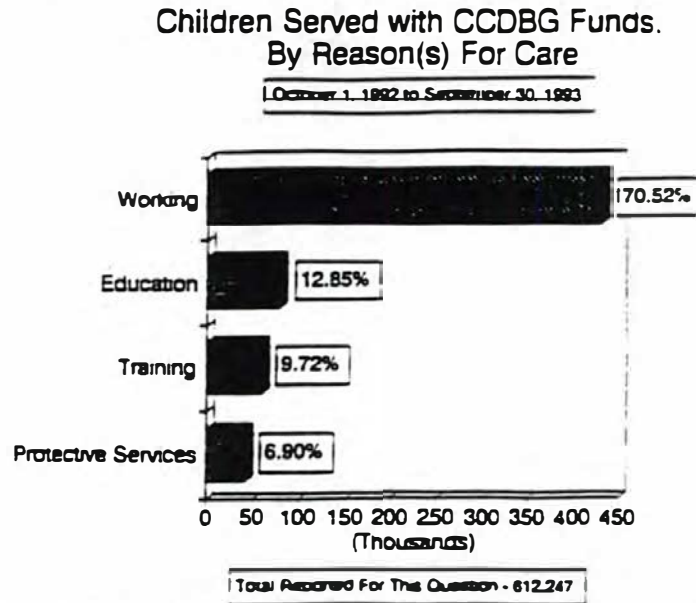


Based on 41 States/Territories reporting the age(s) of children served.

Child Care Numbers (cont.)...

Q. Why did families using CCDBG funds need child care assistance?

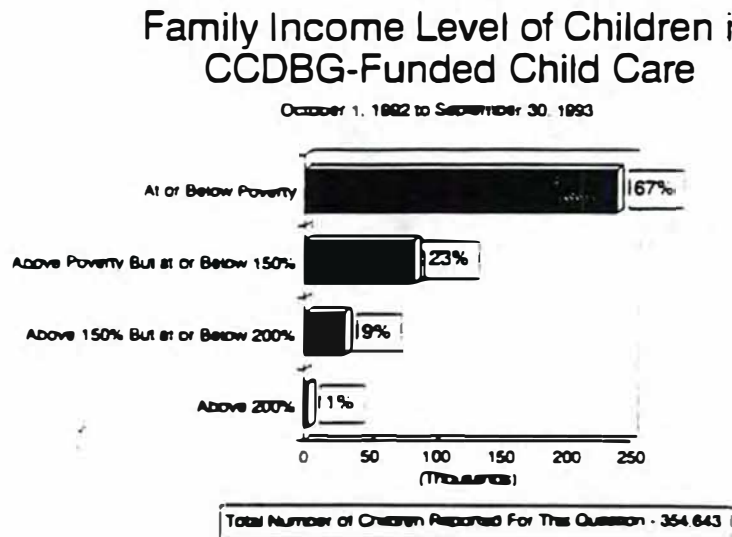
In FY 1993, over two-thirds of the children needed child care because their parents were working.



* Based on 40 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands reporting reasons(s) for care.

Q. What was the income level of the families using CCDBG-funded care?

In FY 1993, approximately two-thirds of the children in CCDBG-funded child care lived in families that were at or below the federal poverty level. Almost a quarter of the children in this program lived in families with incomes between 100 and 150 percent of the poverty level.



Based on 31 States/Territories reporting.

Poverty refers to the Federal poverty level, though States may vary on the year of the Federal poverty level used.

There is a family fee requirement for TCC, ARCC, and CCDBG based on a sliding fee scale. The sliding fee scale is based on family size and income, and may include other factors as well. AFDC families do not contribute to the cost of child care provided under title IV-A.

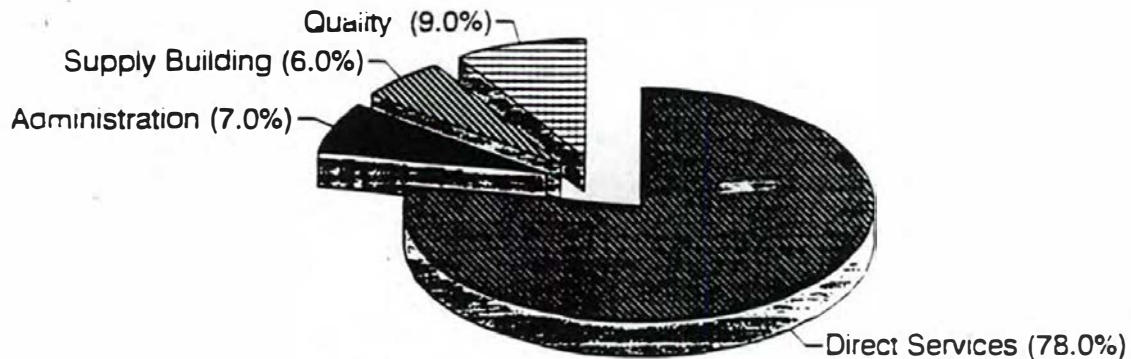
Child Care Numbers (cont.)...

Q. How did CCDBG expenditures increase the quality of child care?

While more than three-fourths of FY 1993 CCDBG expenditures were used for direct services, nine percent of the funds were used to improve the quality of child care. These quality expenditures were used for resource and referral, monitoring, training and technical assistance, grants or loans to providers to improve standards, and projects to improve the compensation of child care workers.

CCDBG Expenditures

October 1, 1992 through September 30, 1993



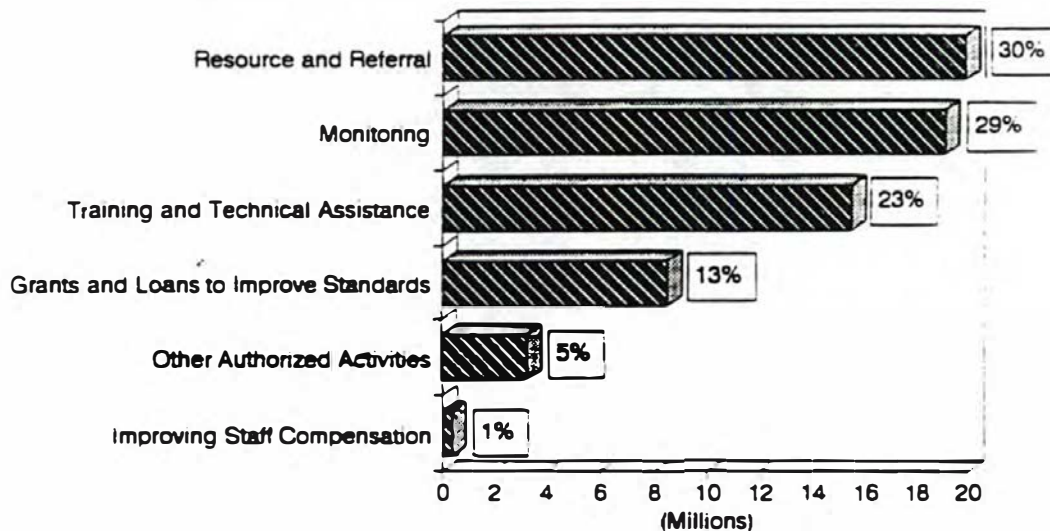
Direct Services: includes child care purchased with certificates, contracts, grants, or as part of before- and after-school care and early childhood development programs.

Administration: administrative expenditures are capped under the CCDBG regulations.

Percentages are based on 48 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the Virgin Islands reporting itemized expenditures.

CCDBG Quality Expenditures

October 1, 1992 through September 30, 1993



Total expenditures on quality under both the 75 and 25 percent funds for reporting period - \$66,470,571

Other Authorized Activities: includes expenses such as conducting a needs assessment or organizing a planning committee.

**Percentages are based on 46 States/Territories reporting itemized expenses.*



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

FEB 22 1995

The Honorable William F. Goodling
Chairman
Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter expresses the Administration's views on the Chairman's mark for child care consolidation and the repeal of several child welfare programs under consideration by the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities.

The Administration believes that both child care and child welfare are important issues for American families, and both issues have a distinguished bipartisan history in the Congress and in this Committee. Child care is of significance to millions of working parents and their children, as well as to those families who are trying to gain a foothold in the labor market. Child welfare services assist millions of our most vulnerable children and families in this Nation each year, often in times of crisis.

The Administration looks forward to working cooperatively with the Congress to pass bipartisan child care legislation and to reform and strengthen the child welfare system. The Administration has, however, serious concerns that a number of the features of the Chairman's mark would undermine the values of work and family to which we are all committed, and might undermine the economic independence of families and the safety and well-being of children.

Child Care

The Administration believes that quality child care is an important component of a welfare reform strategy that is truly about work. Successful child care policy promotes the economic independence of families and children's healthy development; provides parents with real choices among quality alternatives for children of all ages; and encourages continuity of care for the child, regardless of changes in the parent's employment.

Last year, the President submitted a bold welfare reform bill, the Work and Responsibility Act of 1994, which embodied these values. It continued the assurance of child care as families move toward self-sufficiency, and made important new investments in child care for working poor families. At the same time, it extended health, safety, and quality provisions to all the major federal child care programs.

These important supports that enable parents to work and to ensure children's safe and healthy development appear to be missing from the Chairman's mark before you. Therefore,

the Administration has a number of concerns:

- o The proposed legislation provides no assurance of child care to AFDC recipients who work or are preparing to work -- even if a state requires them to participate in work or training. We should and must require all parents to become active and productive workers. And at the same time, we should assist them in their efforts to care for their children so that their children are not left home alone or in unsafe situations.
- o The proposed legislation may require states to choose between serving families making the transition from welfare to work and working families that need child care assistance to keep them from falling onto welfare. With a cap on total funding for child care far below projected spending under current law, and no separate guaranteed source of child care assistance for welfare recipients, the legislation could conceivably reduce assistance by limiting availability to only approximately 200,000 of the million children of hard working American families by FY 2000 currently receiving federal child care support. The Administration believes that we should support working families and that families should not have to go on welfare to receive child care assistance. Moreover, as demonstrated by the waiver applications the Department has received, states which are committed to making AFDC recipients work view child care as an indispensable tool in their efforts.
- o The proposed legislation repeals provisions for children's health and safety contained in the Child Care and Development Block Grant. These provisions were passed with bipartisan support in Congress and signed into law by President Bush after an extensive national debate. They represent a carefully crafted balance between state flexibility and the national interest in children's safety and healthy development. The provisions do not specify any standards at the federal level but instead require that states have such standards in three areas: control of infectious diseases, physical premises safety, and provider training. A study released in the last few weeks reported that most child care is far from adequate and that 40 percent of infant-toddler centers provide poor quality care. We believe that the proposed legislation could increase risks to children's basic health and safety.
- o The proposed legislation also repeals the provision in the Child Care and Development Block Grant that provides resources for quality care, as well as early childhood, before-school and after-school programs. This provision has been instrumental in ensuring that parents have choices among quality alternatives for their children. States have used these resources to build the supply of quality care, provide critical consumer education to parents, improve licensing and monitoring, and increase the training and supports to child care providers. The repeal of this provision raises concerns.

The Administration supports an approach to child care that genuinely supports work for parents, and safety and healthy development for children. Such an approach would assume child care for families moving toward self-sufficiency and expand child care opportunities for working families who want to avoid welfare dependency. We believe that ensuring quality choices for parents, and providing for continuity of services for children and families, should be an element of such a proposal.

Child Welfare.

Children become part of the child welfare system because they have been abused or neglected or are in danger of abuse or neglect. The Administration has serious concerns, expressed in the letter to Ways and Means Subcommittee Chairman Clay Shaw and Ranking Member Harold Ford last week, about the proposed block grant approach to child protection. There is unanimous agreement that the system for serving abused and neglected children and their families is seriously overburdened and unable to respond adequately to the needs of children today. The block grant approach potentially endangers the safety of these children by reducing funds for services and for foster and adoptive homes, eliminating critical protections for their well-being, and potentially halting progress in states that are moving forward on the reforms that are needed in this system.

The proposed legislation consolidates existing programs into a block grant with nominal federal oversight and reduces resources significantly from the current services baseline. The Administration has serious concerns about these provisions. First, the proposed legislation caps spending for child protection at \$5.6 billion less than projected baseline spending over 5 years. This cut could force states to gamble with children's well-being – choosing whether to: leave maltreatment reports uninvestigated, leave children in unsafe homes with minimal services, cut payments to foster parents, or eliminate prevention. Second, the proposed legislation virtually eliminates federal monitoring and accountability mechanisms and also eliminates federal support for research, training, technical assistance, and demonstration projects. It would be virtually impossible for the Federal Government to assure the safety of children or help states improve their systems.

The Chairman's mark repeals the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Adoption Opportunities Program, the Crisis Nurseries Act, the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and the Family Support Centers program under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The activities authorized under these programs would be permitted but not required under the Child Protection Block Grant approved by the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources.

In addition to general concerns about the block granting of child protection funds, the Administration has several specific concerns about the proposed repeal of programs within the jurisdiction of your Committee.

- o The proposed legislation repeals the Adoption Opportunities program and eliminates the Adoption Assistance program, leaving it up to states whether they can afford the subsidies that enable many special needs children to find permanent homes. These repeals could slow the progress that has been made on adoptions since 1988.
- o The legislation repeals the Abandoned Infants program, which was established to respond to the continuing crises of AIDS and crack cocaine. These crises have disproportionate effects on families and child welfare systems in selected urban areas.
- o The proposed legislation eliminates all direct federal support for non-profit agencies, community-based organizations and public-private partnerships, such as Children's Trust Funds, as well as all earmarked support for prevention of child abuse and neglect.

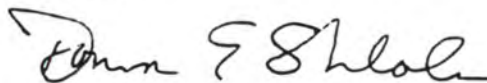
The Administration is committed to improving the child welfare system. The system must ensure the safety of children and strengthen the capacity of parents to nurture healthy children. Given the critical nature of these services, the Administration supports an approach to change that provides states and communities with flexibility to develop services that are responsive to the needs of their citizens, but within the context of a national framework that maintains a commitment to federal resources, and strong, effective protections for children and families.

In summary, the Administration looks forward to working with the Committee in a bipartisan fashion to promote two key goals: work for families and safety and healthy development for children. But we are concerned that the proposed legislation does not move toward these goals. It does nothing to provide child care that would move families from welfare to work, and it risks moving families who are now working back onto welfare as they lose child care assistance. It weakens protections for children's safety in child care, and gambles with their well-being if they are abused or neglected. It neither holds state bureaucracies accountable nor cushions state taxpayers against recession or growing family needs. We believe there are alternative approaches to reform that achieve our mutual goals in far more constructive and accountable ways.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the transmittal of this report to Congress.

A similar letter also was sent to Representative William Clay and members of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna E. Shalala". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donna" and last name "Shalala" clearly distinguishable.

Donna E. Shalala

ESTIMATED REDUCTION IN FEDERAL SPENDING FOR CHILD CARE FROM PROPOSED CHILD CARE BLOCK GRANT
(Numbers in millions)

ESTIMATED REDUCTION IN FEDERAL SPENDING UNDER CHILD CARE BLOCK GRANT USING HHS BUDGET AUTHORITY BASELINE FIGURES	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	5 Year Total
AFDC/JOBS	734	784	829	869	911	4,127
TCC	220	234	248	260	272	1,234
At-Risk	300	300	300	300	300	1,500
CCDBG	1,049	1,049	1,049	1,049	1,049	5,245
Child Devment Associate Scholarships	1	1	1	2	2	7
Dependent Care Planning and Devment Grants	13	14	14	14	15	70
Native Hawaiian Family Centers (CBO est.)	5	5	6	6	6	28
SUBTOTAL HHS BASELINES	2,322	2,387	2,447	2,500	2,555	12,211
CHILD CARE BLOCK GRANT	1,943	1,943	1,943	1,943	1,943	9,715
REDUCED SPENDING FOR CHILD CARE	-379	-444	-504	-557	-612	-2,496
PERCENT REDUCTION IN SPENDING	-16%	-19%	-21%	-22%	-24%	-20.4%

Notes:

1. This Child Care Block Grant freezes funding at the FY1994 levels estimated in CBO's baseline.
2. The numbers above are HHS estimates based on baseline figures from the President's FY1996 budget except for the Native Hawaiian Family Centers estimate which is from the CBO baseline.
3. CBO estimates were based on January 1995 CBO Baseline figures. They estimate five year savings of \$1.7b or a 15 percent reduction in spending. These differ from HHS estimates due to baseline differences.
4. Savings projected by the EEO committee are based on CBO baseline figures.

REDUCED FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FOR STATES AND CHILDREN IN FY2000

	LOSS IN FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FROM BLOCK GRANT	REDUCTION IN CHILDREN RECEIVING FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE
ALABAMA	\$11.3	6,970
ALASKA	\$1.5	930
ARIZONA	\$10.3	6,350
ARKANSAS	\$4.6	2,840
CALIFORNIA	\$53.7	33,130
COLORADO	\$6.3	3,890
CONNECTICUT	\$7.0	4,320
DELAWARE	\$1.9	1,170
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	\$1.3	1,110
FLORIDA	\$25.7	15,850
GEORGIA	\$21.2	13,000
HAWAII	\$2.0	1,230
IDAHO	\$2.4	1,480
ILLINOIS	\$22.1	13,630
INDIANA	\$12.3	7,590
IOWA	\$4.8	2,960
KANSAS	\$6.4	3,950
KENTUCKY	\$10.6	6,540
LOUISIANA	\$11.3	6,970
MAINE	\$2.0	1,230
MARYLAND	\$11.1	6,850
MASSACHUSETTS	\$16.3	10,060
MICHIGAN	\$15.2	9,380
MINNESOTA	\$11.1	6,850
MISSISSIPPI	\$6.6	4,070
MISSOURI	\$12.0	7,400
MONTANA	\$1.9	1,170
NEBRASKA	\$5.0	3,000
NEVADA	\$1.9	1,170
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$2.1	1,300
NEW JERSEY	\$10.5	6,480
NEW MEXICO	\$5.3	3,270
NEW YORK	\$37.0	22,830
NORTH CAROLINA	\$27.7	17,890
NORTH DAKOTA	\$1.5	930
OHIO	\$28.9	17,830
OKLAHOMA	\$11.3	6,970
OREGON	\$8.8	5,430
PENNSYLVANIA	\$24.2	14,930
PUERTO RICO	\$7.7	4,750
RHODE ISLAND	\$2.7	1,670
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$7.9	4,870
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$1.5	930
TENNESSEE	\$16.8	10,360
TEXAS	\$44.4	27,390
UTAH	\$6.8	4,190
VERMONT	\$1.6	990
VIRGINIA	\$11.3	6,970
WASHINGTON	\$16.4	10,120
WEST VIRGINIA	\$4.5	2,780
WISCONSIN	\$10.1	6,230
WYOMING	\$1.4	860
TRIBES	\$18.4	11,350
TERRITORIES	\$3.1	1,910
ALL STATES	\$612.0	377,680
Percent Reduction	24.8%	

Notes:

1. The block grant amount is set at FY1994 CBO baseline levels.
2. Funds are allocated according to HHS figures on FY1994 expenditures and allocations.
3. FY2000 figures are FY1994 allocations and expenditures adjusted by the national growth rate figures.
4. Children served was determined by dividing total federal allocations and expenditures by an average federal expenditure figure of \$1621. This is not a full-time equivalent.
5. Numbers may not exactly equal national figures due to rounding.

REDUCED FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FOR STATES AND CHILDREN IN FY 2000

This table shows FY 2000 losses in funding and in numbers of children receiving federal assistance under the new child care block grant.

FUNDING LOSS

The funding loss is the difference between the FY 2000 block grant distribution and the expected FY 2000 funding level under current law. FY 2000 funds are distributed according to the proportion of federal child care funds received in FY 1994, as is proposed in the draft EEO bill.

REDUCTION IN CHILDREN RECEIVING FEDERAL CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

The reduction in children is derived from the State's funding loss and the national average child care funding per child. Average funding per child was calculated by dividing the total federal child care funding in FY 1993 by the total number of children served through federal child care programs in that year. This number is not a full-time equivalent cost. It does not contain state or parent contributions to the cost of care. The FY 1993 funding per child was inflated to FY 2000 according to the HHS baseline.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S
rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
002. fax	re: child care [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (2 pages)	02/28/1995	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S
rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

FEB 14 1995

Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

(b)(6)

[002]

Dear Ms. (b)(6)

This is in response to your letter to President Clinton regarding child care.

Your letter was referred to the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). The ACYF is responsible for Federal oversight of child care programs for families on public assistance (AFDC), families who leave public assistance because they are working, families who are at risk of going on public assistance if they don't get help with paying for child care, and child care for low-income working families. The ACYF does not provide child care assistance directly to families, however.

From your letter to President Clinton it appears that you might be eligible for transitional child care (TCC) if your AFDC was stopped because of earnings from your job at the Wine Cellar. TCC is child care that is guaranteed to families who leave AFDC because of their earnings and who meet certain other requirements. I suggest that you re-contact your county public assistance office to verify if you are eligible for this assistance.

At this time in California, I understand that there is more need for help with paying for child care than there is help available. If you are working but find you are not eligible for TCC, I suggest that you apply for other child care program assistance, even though you may be placed on a waiting list for help. Apply through your local child care resource and referral agency.

Please be assured that President Clinton is very aware of the critical need of working families for child care and welcomes your comments.

Sincerely,

Olivia A. Golden
Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

THIS
2000222
DEAR MR CLINTON

MY NAME IS (b)(6)
I LIVE IN SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA I AM A 26 YEAR OLD MOTER WITH TWO BOYS
(b)(6)

IN DECEMBER.

I VE RECENTLY GOTTEN OFF OF AFDC AIDE
WITH A WONDERFUL FULLTIME FRONT DESK JOB
WITH BENIEITS AT A BUISNESS.

BY THE NAME OF THE WINE CELLER, ALSO IN SONOMA COUNTY.

BUT, BECAUSE OF MY FINACIAL STATUS AT THE PRESENT TIME IM UNABLE TO AFORD THE UNBELEAVABLE COST OF DAY CARE FOR MY SON LEXUS. BECAUSE OF THE OUTRAGIOUS EXPSENCE IVE SIGNED UP WITH DIFFERENT AGENTCIES THEY SAY IM TOP PRIORATIE BUT BECAUSE OF MY EARNINGS EACH MONTH THEY CAN NOT HELP ME.

SO SIR ITS LIKE THIS IM FINIALLY OFF AIDE(AFDC) WITH BENIFITS , AND HAVE NO HELP WITH CHILD CARE. AS OF 11-11-94 I WAS FORCED TO STOP WORKING FOR MY COMPANY THEREFORE I WILL HAVE TO GO BACK ON AIDE AFTER ONLY 1½ MONTH ON A GREAT JOB . NOW I SIT HOME WATCHING MY OWN CHILD DOING NOTHING WITH MY TIME. WHEN SIR HONESTLY , ID RATHER BE SUPPORTING MY OWN FAMILY THAN HAVING THE SYSTEM DOING IT FOR ME. I VE GONE AS FAR AS 6 MONTHS OF TRAINING TO ACCOMPLISH MY GED ALSO I HAVE GOTTEN MY CLASS "B" DRIVERS LICENSE WITH MY PASSENGER INDORSMENT I HAVE SO MUCH IWOULD LIKE TO DO ,WITH NO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP ME ACCOMPLISH MY GOALS.ALL I WANT IS TO WORK HARD AND HAVE MY BOYS LOOK UP TO ME , I WOULD RATHER THEM WORK THAN HAVE TO RAISE THIER CHILDEREN ON THE SYSTEM YOU SAY YOU WANT THE SYSTEM TO WORK , WELL TO BE FRANK SIR IT WILL NOT UNLESS YOU HAVE A PLAN FOR DAYCARE.I AM ONE WHO KNOWS!

AND IF YOU WOULD HELP ME WITH SOME KIND OF FINANCIAL DIRECTION OR A PLAN FOR ONE YEAR I WOULD MAKE YOU PROUD TO PRESEDENT.

THANK YOU
(b)(6)

P.S.I HOPE YOU FIND THIS LETTER AS SOME KIND OF A ISSUE BECAUSE THIS IS A MAJOR GROWING PROBLEM IN OUR SOCIETY AND WELFARE WILL NEVER BE BANNED FROM THE HUMAN RACE WITHOUT SOME KIND OF VERY AFFORDABLE DAY CARE SYSTEMFOR OUR CHILDEREN.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
003. fax	re: personal story (6 pages)	02/28/1995	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S

rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES**Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]**

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

APR 18 1994

Ms. Marilyn A. Henry
503 South 23rd Street
Bethany, Missouri 64424

Dear Ms. Henry:

This is in response to your letter to First Lady Hillary Clinton requesting a list of referrals to agencies that work with children that are disabled and any available funding that may be able to assist the Tykes to Teens, Inc.

I have enclosed a State Resource Sheet developed by the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities that lists agencies in Missouri that may be useful to you.

One program that may be able to provide the Tykes to Teens, Inc. with funding assistance is the Child Care and Development Block Grant (Block Grant). For information on the Block Grant program in Missouri, I suggest that you contact the Missouri Department of Social Services at the address below:

Ms. Doris Hall Ford
Deputy Director for Income Maintenance
Division of Family Services
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 88
Jefferson City, Missouri 65103
(314) 751-3124

I hope this information is helpful to you. Your interest in the welfare of our children is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Olivia A. Golden
Commissioner
Administration for Children, Youth
and Families

Enclosure

Correspondence# 1333020
Department of Health and Human Services

March 14, 1994

Ms. Marilyn A. Henry
503 South 23rd
Bethany, Missouri 64424

Dear Ms. Henry:

Thank you very much for your recent letter. Mrs. Clinton greatly appreciates your expression of trust and confidence in her.

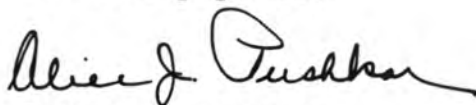
To ensure that your concerns are addressed, I have referred your letter to the following agency for any appropriate action:

Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

I have asked the agency for a prompt reply, but please bear in mind that it may take some time to look thoroughly into the concerns you raised. If you have any questions after reviewing the agency's response, you may write to the address listed above.

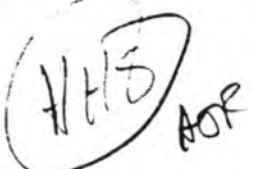
I appreciate your patience and hope that your situation is resolved satisfactorily.

Sincerely yours,



Alice J. Pushkar
Director of Correspondence
for the First Lady

9403160070

~~Handwritten scribbles at top of page~~
 1333020
503 South 23rd St.
Bethany, MO 6442
Feb. 16, 1994

Mrs. Hilary Clinton
1600 Penn. Ave.
Washington D.C.

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

I have two purposes in writing to you. Both of these purposes have the welfare of children in mind.

First of all I want to give you a background of myself. I am sixty-four years old and have been involved in education, both in the elementary, pre-school, and college level since I was eighteen years of age. Presently I am a University Supervisor at N.W.M.S.U. at Maryville, MO. I supervise student teachers in Iowa and N.W.MO. Now I feel that it is time to get into a political job that would help children. I am extremely interested in child welfare, child abuse, children that are disabled, etc. Are there any agencies that you could refer me to that I can work with. I can't just sit and do nothing to help, nor can I live on a teachers retirement.

I also screen children and adults for Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome and have found that this is a great problem with children and adults that have problems reading. Many of the children that have problems in school academically and behaviorally have this light sensitivity that causes school failure or if not severe, the sensitivity can cause frustrations, a poor self concept, and a dislike for reading or the academic. I took my training under Dr. Suderland and she in turn took hers from Dr. Irlen in California. It is a simple process of screening with colored overlays and then obtaining a tint in their glasses. I found that about 80% of the students that I screened for S.S.S. at Graceland College at Lamoni, IA. These students were in the CHANCE program for the L.D. Not all purchased the glasses but they did use the overlays and they were astounded as to the improvement shown.

I'm convinced that many of our juveniles and prison inmates have this S.S.S. and this in turn is detrimental to their self concept and they feel dumb and act out. Very bright and even gifter individuals suffer from this. It can often cause behavioral disorders and attention deficit disorders.

Now, the next issue I wish to address is day care. I know that you are concerned about this issue. I am on the board of directors of the TYKES TO TEENS, INC. day care here in Bethany, MO. We serve children from the county from age six weeks to twelve. The school age children, after school program is a service we offer for the At Risk children or Latch Key children. We open our doors at 6:30 A.M. and close at 6:00 P.M. to accommodate those parents that are working, commuting and going back to school or college. They often take advantage of the Family Services assistance to help them financially until they are able to get through school. We have the capacity to serve fifty children. Due to the resignation of the director we had to hire a new director last summer, she did not work out and now after hiring another director in the later part of Jan. we discovered that we have only 32 enrolled now, compared to 110 last summer. The board of directors (non-salaried) met last night and talked about alternatives, because the center is losing \$3000. a month now. We know the center is badly needed in this county. We realize we lost several families that left because of the flood and damage done to homes and crops in the surrounding areas, but we can't keep losing money that we don't have.

When I was Elem. Prin. here, in Bethany, families moving in would often become desperate for child care. We have built a new center, are licensed, meet all state standards and when full employ ten persons. Our five year olds do wonderfully well on the KIDS test given as a entrance test to the public school.

→ (I feel a sense of urgency for the bank is closing in as well as other creditors. Perhaps you know of some agency, foundation, etc. that is an advocate of children and would help support our center. I don't know where these parents can find a child care center to place these children. We can't charge the big fees as the cities for our parents do not usually make much more than minimum wage, for we have constantly had to have fund raisers and write for grants to survive. There surely is some way that day care centers can concentrate on the needs of the children instead of constantly trying to raise money to operate. I would be glad to furnish you with more information. You may call the center and speak to the new director.

Phyllis Claycomb 816-425-8881 (New Director)

Shelly Cook 816-425-4436 (Past Director)

Rick Glenn 816-425-7425 (C.P.A.)

Cindy Polley 816-872-8881 (President of the Board)

Delbert Washburn 816-425-2261 (First National Bank)

Thank you for the time that it has taken to read this and for your concern for the welfare of our nation. I think you are doing a terrific job. I am very proud of you for the dignity that you have displayed as the press and others have tried to destroy you. Keep up the good work.

Marilyn A. Henry

Sincerely,

Marilyn A. Henry
816-425-4436

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004a. letter	re: social services [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	02/29/1994	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S
rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

FEB 23 1987

(b)(6)

[0049]

Dear (b)(6) :

This is in response to your letter to First Lady Hillary Clinton regarding the loss of your food stamp eligibility and the termination of your child care assistance which resulted when you got a raise in your income.

We understand your frustration with your current child care situation and appreciate your desire to attain economic independence. However, the Federal government does not have jurisdiction over setting income guidelines in your State. These decisions are made by your State and local governments.

My staff did contact the Nebraska Department of Social Services (DSS) regarding your situation. They advised us that there are a number of families, such as yours, whose increase in income does not fully cover their child care fees. We understand that the DSS is exploring ways to lighten the income eligibility cut-off for various subsidy programs.

For information regarding what Nebraska is considering and assistance in locating affordable child care, I suggest that you contact Ms. Deborah Mabry-Strong with the DSS at the address below:

Ms. Deborah Mabry-Strong
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5026
(402) 471-9451

I hope this information will be helpful to you and that your child care needs will be resolved soon.

Sincerely,

Olivia A. Golden
Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004b. letter	re: social services [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	12/17/1993	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S
rc2869

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1/24/94
DATE

MEMORANDUM

FOR:

HHS/ACF

FROM:

JENNIFER MCCARTHY
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF AGENCY LIAISON

SUBJECT:

REFERRAL OF CASEWORK

I am forwarding the attached letter to your office for any appropriate action. Please return the original correspondence, along with any written or telephone response, should any be necessary, to the following address:

Ms. Jennifer McCarthy
Director, Office of Agency Liaison
Room 6, OEOB
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

If you have any questions you can reach my office at
202/456-7486.
Thanks.

94-1260032



Washington, D.C. 20201

DEC 17 1993

Alice J. Pushkar
Director of Correspondence
for the First Lady
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: [REDACTED] (b)(6)
WH. [REDACTED]

[009b]

Ms. [REDACTED] (b)(6) indicates that she is having a problem regarding child care assistance. You may wish to refer this inquiry to the Administration for Children and Families.

Johnnie M. Christian, Chief
Correspondence Control Branch
Tel. 202/690-8375

HHS/HCF

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004c. letter	From: Alice J. Pushkar [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	12/02/1993	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

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AC
FOOD STAMPS -
CHILD CARE

Correspondence# 1130591
~~Health Care Financing Administration~~ *let*

December 2, 1993

(b)(6)

COO4C]

Dear (b)(6)

Thank you very much for your recent letter. Mrs. Clinton greatly appreciates your expression of trust and confidence in her.

To ensure that your concerns are addressed, I have referred your letter to the following agency for any appropriate action:

Health Care Financing Administration
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

I have asked the agency for a prompt reply, but please bear in mind that it may take some time to look thoroughly into the concerns you raised. If you have any questions after reviewing the agency's response, you may write to the address listed above.

I appreciate your patience and hope that your situation is resolved satisfactorily.

Sincerely yours,

Alice J. Pushkar
Director of Correspondence
for the First Lady

1993 DEC -7 AM 10:16

HCFA/EXEC.SEC.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004d. letter	re: social services [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	10/28/1993	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

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DGJ.
HCF
HCF

Y13 0591

Dear First Lady Hillary Clinton,

October 28, 1993

I would like to address a problem I have with the Social Service program. As of May of '93 I am no longer eligible for foodstamps due to an increase in my income. I now find out I am no longer eligible as of September for child care assistance, due to the same increase.

According to the Nebraska guidelines I make \$35 too much for foodstamps and \$16 too much for child care. I understand guidelines must be set by the government by which assistance is given. However, these guidelines do not always fit the needs of everyone.

This is my situation. I am the mother of two children, with a full-time supervisory position at a grocery store. I am also a full-time student at Bellevue College. I have a gross monthly income of \$1016 from my job. I am also decreed the amount of \$273 a month child support, which I do not always receive. My children have two different fathers, both of which are in arrears. This can only tell you how irresponsible and inconsistent the child support payments are being made.

The state of Nebraska was paying my child care provider \$702 a month. I can not possibly pay this amount plus my other monthly expenses each month. My pay raise does not equal \$702 a month; consequently I'm actually losing money, not gaining.

I feel I have only two options. First, to continue working full-time so I can receive medical benefits and pay my bills, rent, utilities, child care etc.

Second, which I feel may be my only option. To quit work enabling myself to meet guidelines by which to receive assistance.

I have a hard time understanding why the government would be so eager to see me quit my job so I am eligible for assistance. I seriously would like to think, the government would be more willing to assist someone who chooses to try to better herself and the lives of her children.

I come from a broken home and realize the devastation it causes. My mother also received public assistance and I am hoping not to continue this cycle with my children. Unfortunately we see these cycles continue because of the government guidelines. The system seems to help out only those who choose not to help themselves. I am not asking for a handout, only help.

I feel as if I'm between a rock and a hard place. I can continue to work and not feed my children, because I can no longer get assistance for child care and now need to provide this along with my other bills with no foodstamps to help. I could possibly work part-time giving up my medical benefits, not to mention the position I worked hard for.

I continue to think the second option is my only real choice, quit my job and receive foodstamps and child care assistance while at school. This will enable me to finish my education and never have to rely on government assistance again.

I'm really confused. I'm trying to better myself and become a more productive citizen. I am also trying to prevent my children from continuing this cycle of government assistance. Instead I am told to quit trying and let the government do everything for you. Is that what should be passed on to my children? I hope not!

I don't believe this is an all or nothing situation. I feel the government could give me some type of assistance rather than have me quit my job and pay for everything. Please, if you have other options you feel I should consider, I would greatly appreciate your input. I look forward to your reply. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

[6042]

Return reply to:

(b)(6)



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

APR 28 1994

Ms. Laurie Frain
The Toddler Center
2111 Arapahoe
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Dear Ms. Frain:

This is in response to your letter to First Lady Hillary Clinton regarding the change in the reimbursement rate to child care providers in Boulder, Colorado.

There is a heightened awareness at all levels regarding the growing need for investment in child care. Child care provides critical development services and essential support for both working families and those who are striving to become self-sufficient. The President is committed to funding Federal child care programs to assist States in providing the supports necessary for needy citizens to become and remain self-sufficient. In his most recent request to the Congress, the President requested a funding increase of \$172 million, almost 20 percent, in the Block Grant program.

Child care assistance is provided by the States through a number of Federal funded programs: The Child Care and Development Block Grant, title IV-A which funds child care for AFDC recipients, Transitional Child Care and At-Risk Child Care. Under Federal regulations, however, States have the flexibility to set a maximum statewide limit on payments for child care. Colorado has chosen to set a statewide limit for child care reimbursement for all programs.

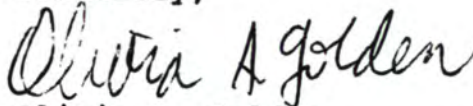
For more specific information on Colorado's reimbursement rate, you may want to contact the Colorado Department of Social Services at the address below:

Ms. Grace Hardy
Manager
Office of Child Care Services
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714
(303) 866-5958

Page 2 - Ms. Laurie Frain

Thank you for your commitment to bettering the lives of children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olivia A. Golden". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Olivia A. Golden

Commissioner

Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

Correspondence# 1405239
Department of Health and Human Services

March 29, 1994

Ms. Laurie Frain
The Toddler Center
2111 Arapahoe
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Dear Ms. Frain:

Thank you very much for your recent letter. Mrs. Clinton greatly appreciates your expression of trust and confidence in her.

To ensure that your concerns are addressed, I have referred your letter to the following agency for any appropriate action:

Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

I have asked the agency for a prompt reply, but please bear in mind that it may take some time to look thoroughly into the concerns you raised. If you have any questions after reviewing the agency's response, you may write to the address listed above.

I appreciate your patience and hope that your situation is resolved satisfactorily.

Sincerely yours,



Alice J. Pushkar
Director of Correspondence
for the First Lady

9403310065

~~Cass~~

1405239

HHS
ASR

**WESTERN
UNION | TELEGRAM**

ISSUE DATE: 03/11/94 MsgCtrlNo: 999 643 1563
3037869697 FRB TDXN BOULDER CO 57 03-11 0338P EST

HILLARY CLINTON,

WHITE HOUSE DC 20500

HILLARY CLINTON, PLEASE LOOK INTO SOCIAL SERVICE REIMBURSEMENT RATE
CHANGE THAT HAS HAPPENED TO BOULDER, COLORADO CHILD CARE CENTERS.
AFFECTS SOCIAL SERVICE CHILDREN AND PARENTS AND LIVING WAGE OF CHILD
CARE WORKERS. WELCOME TO LOOK AT CENTER BOOKKEEPING AND VISIT OUR
QUALITY CARE CENTER. OUR TEACHERS ARE HARD WORKING, NURTURING
AMERICANS BEING EXPLOITED BY OUR OWN GOVERNMENT.

LAURIE FRAIN

THE TODDLER CENTER 303-786-9697

2111 ARAPAHOE

BOULDER

CO 80302

1538 EST

Msg Seq No. : 13035



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

MAY - 3 1994

Mrs. Dedra P. Miller
5868 Thunder Hill Road, #C3
Columbia, Maryland 21045

Dear Mrs. Miller:

This is in response to your letter to First Lady Hillary Clinton regarding your concerns about the need for quality child care in the City of Baltimore, Maryland.

There is a heightened awareness at all levels of government regarding the growing need for investment in child care. Child care provides critical developmental services and is an essential support for both working families and those who are striving to become self-sufficient.

I am delighted to report to you that this Administration shares your commitment to increased funding for child care. In a time of tight budget constraints, the President's budget proposal for fiscal year 1995 requests a funding increase of \$172 million for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (the Block Grant) and a \$700 million increase for Head Start, an almost 20 percent increase for both programs. This increase will allow States like Maryland to continue providing subsidies for thousands of needy parents.

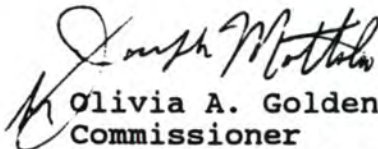
To inquire about possible funding sources for your child care training proposal, I suggest you contact the Training Clearinghouse Advisory Committee, established collaboratively by the Maryland Committee for Children, Inc., Maryland Child Care Resource Network, and Maryland Department of Human Resources, Child Care and Development Block Grant. This group recently published a report entitled "A New Beginning: A Blueprint For A Career Development and Training Plan For Maryland's Child Care Professionals." A copy of this report can be obtained by writing to:

Maureen Keck
Director
Maryland Child Care Resource Network
Training Department
608 Water Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202-4079
(410) 752-7588

Page 2 - Mrs. Dedra P. Miller

I wish you and your family well and hope that the information in this letter will be useful in pursuing your proposed initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Olivia A. Golden".

Olivia A. Golden
Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

Correspondence# 1395474
Department of Health and Human Services

April 4, 1994

Ms. Dedra P. Miller
Apartment C3
5868 Thunder Hill Road
Columbia, Maryland 21045

Dear Ms. Miller:

Thank you very much for your recent letter. Mrs. Clinton greatly appreciates your expression of trust and confidence in her.

To ensure that your concerns are addressed, I have referred your letter to the following agency for any appropriate action:

Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

I have asked the agency for a prompt reply, but please bear in mind that it may take some time to look thoroughly into the concerns you raised. If you have any questions after reviewing the agency's response, you may write to the address listed above.

I appreciate your patience and hope that your situation is resolved satisfactorily.

Sincerely yours,



Alice J. Pushkar
Director of Correspondence
for the First Lady

9404080021

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
005, letter	re: personal story [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	03/08/1994	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S
rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

(HHS) *MR* 1395474
DEDRA P. MILLER
5868 THUNDER HILL ROAD # C3
COLUMBIA, MD 21045

MARCH 8, 1994

MRS. HILLARY RODHAM - CLINTON
WHITE HOUSE
1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NORTH-WEST
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20500

DEAR MRS. CLINTON:

I AM WRITING YOU CONCERNING THE NEED FOR STRUCTURED, NURTURING,
AND LOVING CHILD CARE IN THE CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.
AS THE MOTHER OF THREE CHILDREN AND THE GRAND MOTHER OF THREE
WONDERFUL GRAND CHILDREN, I HAVE OBSERVED MY DAUGHTER
ENCOUNTERING THE SAME UNNECESSARY BATTLE OF OBTAINING
DEPENDABLE, LOVING CHILD CARE FOR HER CHILDREN, JUST AS I DID
TWENTY YEARS AGO WHILE I WORKED AND ATTENDED SCHOOL.

(b)(6)

[005]

WITH A FAILED MARRIAGE AND TWO YOUNG CHILDREN I REALIZED
THAT I COULD NOT SUPPORT MY CHILDREN ON A 7th GRADE
EDUCATION. WITH LIMITED RESOURCES, AND VERY LITTLE IN THE
WAY OF FAMILY ENCOURAGEMENT, I WORKED AND EARNED MY
GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE, AND FROM THERE
I WAS ADMITTED TO COPPIN STATE COLLEGE, GRADUATING WITH A
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. THIS DEGREE
ALLOWED ME TO WORK IN THE BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
AS A CLASSROOM SPECIAL EDUCATOR. THIS EXPERIENCE TAUGHT ME
THAT I HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF "THE REAL MEANING OF HELL".
COMPARED TO WHAT SOME OF MY STUDENTS HAD TO DEAL WITH, I HAD
A VERY GOOD LIFE AS A CHILD.

MARCH 8, 1994

MRS. HILLARY RODHAM-CLINTON:

SINCE FEBRUARY OF 1991 I HAVE STUDIED UNDER DR. ADELE FRYER OF "HOME PLAY SCHOOLS, Inc." OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND. DR. FRYER OPENED MY EYES AS TO WHAT STRUCTURED, QUALITY, LOVING CHILD CARE IS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE AND SECURITY DURING THE EARLY DEVELOPING STAGES OF CHILDHOOD. WITH YOUR HELP, MRS. CLINTON I INTEND TO UTILIZE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING ~~EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYMENT FOR LADIES ON "WELFARE". PROVIDING THESE LADIES WITH A MEANS OF NOT ONLY "GETTING OFF" OF PUBLIC WELFARE, BUT PROVIDING A MUCH NEEDED SERVICE THE "INNER CITY" CHILD LACKS~~ AT THIS TIME, STRUCTURE AND A SENSE OF SECURITY IN EVERY DAY LIFE. ~~I SEE NO REASON WHY MY GRAND CHILDREN OR ANY OTHER CHILD~~ LIVING IN THE "INNER" CITY CAN NOT HAVE OR EXPERIENCE QUALITY CARE, SINCE MOST OF THE NEEDED COMPONENTS ARE IN PLACE TO BE UTILIZED. TALENTED, LOVING BUT UNPREPARED LADIES WAITING EACH MONTH FOR THE MAILMAN TO BRING THEM A CHECK OF \$ 290.00 FROM THE LOCAL WELFARE OFFICE. I INTEND TO TRAIN THESE LADIES, AS DR. FRYER HAS TRAINED ME AND OTHERS AS CHILD CARE PROVIDERS. ENCLOSED IS AN OUTLINE AND APPROXIMATE COST FOR THIS MUCH NEEDED SERVICE. I AWAIT YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR MY GRAND CHILDREN AND OTHER CHILDREN RESIDING WITHIN THE "INNER" CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND IN NEED OF NURTURING LOVING CHILD CARE.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS

Dedra P. Miller

(MRS) DEDRA P. MILLER

OPERATION:

THE ORGANIZATION WILL PROVIDE A RATIO OF THREE (3) MONITORS FOR EVERY(15) PROJECT INDEPENDENCE CARE GIVER. ASSISTING THE POTENTIAL CARE GIVER IN ACQUIRING THE NECESSARY CREDENTIALS, TRAINING, AND SKILLS NEEDED TO PROVIDE A SANITARY, LOVING, AND NURTURING ATMOSPHERE THAT WILL BE CONDUCIVE TO A CHILD BEING THE BEST THAT HE CAN BE.

DUE TO THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT SEEM TO SURROUND TOO MANY CITY COMMUNITIES. MONITORS WILL ASSIST CANDIDATES FOR CARE GIVER TO BRING HER HOME UP TO HEALTH AND FIRE DEPARTMENT CODE.

ONCE THE CANDIDATE HAS MET THE GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS, THE MONITOR WILL ASSIST IN COMPLETING ANY NECESSARY FORMS, AS WELL AS HELP IN SELECTING SAFE AND AGE APPROPRIATE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT. AT THE COMPLETION OF TRAINING THE ORGANIZATION WILL PROVIDE CONTINUES SUPPORT AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE HOME CHILD CARE PROVIDER UP TO A PERIOD OF (1) ONE YEAR IN THE FORM OF A NET WORK OF COMMUNITY PROFESSIONALS AND PROGRAMS SUCH AS: PSYCHOLOGIST, DRUG AWARENESS/HELP, REFERRALS TO GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE AGENCIES, ASSISTENCE WITH BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH PROBLEMS AS WELL AS ANY OTHER AVAILABLE RESOURCE TO" ACHIEVE SUCCESS FOR EACH CHILD.

EACH CHILD CARE PROVIDER WILL GO THRU A TRAINING PERIOD OF AT LEAST TWELVE WEEKS, ADDRESSING THE NEED TO PROVIDE NUTRITIOUS MEALS AND SNACKS, AS WELL AS PROVIDING A CLEAN AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT. TO ENSURE THAT THE PROVIDER REMAINS ON TASK, MONITORING WILL CONTINUE UP TO ONE YEAR, OR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

DIRECT EXPENSES FOR PARTICIPANTS

PER PARTICIPANT

12 + CLOCK HOURS
CPR CERTIFICATION (4 days)
RED CROSS 1st AID COURSE
POLICE FINGER PRINTING
POLICE BACK GROUND CHECK
HOME SAFETY INSPECTION (smoke alarm, safety rails
PER SMOKE ALARM etc.)
TRANSPORTATION
FIRST AID KIT
EXTERMINATOR (pest) with re-inspection
DOMESTIC ENGINEER with re-inspection
DAY CARE START- UP COST PER PARTICIPANT

3 MONTHS LIABILITY INSURANCE (varies as to location)
3 MONTHS OF PAPER GOODS (towels,plates, cups,forms,
folders,toilet paper)
3 MONTHS OF CLEANING SUPPLIES (bleach,liquid soap)
9 TABLES and 8 CHAIRS (CHILDREN)
EQUIPMENT (trampoline,tunnel)
TOYS and CRAFTS
RIDING TOYS

TOTAL: \$2,777.00

EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT EXPENSES PER PARTICIPANT

BALTIMORE ZOO
WALTERS ART GALLERY
NIXON'S FARM
FIRE STATION
WASHINGTON ZOO
BALTIMORE RAILROAD MUSEUM
POLICE DEPARTMENT
BOWLING
FAMILY GATHERING/PICNIC
DINNER THEATER

SUB TOTAL: \$350.00

ADMINISTRATIVE COST

SUB TOTAL: \$1,987

TOTAL: \$5,114

THE ABOVE EXPENSES REFLECT THE COST PER PARTICIPANT, INCLUDING DAY CARE START - UP COST, PLUS THREE (3) MONTHS LIABILITY INSURANCE.

THE PURPOSE OF THE EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM IS TO PRESENT THE PARTICIPANT WITH AN AWARENESS OF HER COMMUNITIES, THUS BEING PREPARED TO PROVIDE HER CHARGES WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS, PROMOTING APPRECIATION FOR WHAT IS WITHIN THE CHILD'S WORLD.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

FEB -8 1984

The Parent Advisory Council
Windham County Family Support Program
218 Canal Street
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

Dear Parent Advisory Council:

This is in response to your letter to President and Mrs. Clinton expressing support for refunding of the Comprehensive Child Development Program.

I can assure you that my staff is currently hard at work on drafting legislation which will continue this important demonstration in the most appropriate manner possible. Although no specifics are available at this time, your views regarding the Comprehensive Child Development Program are being given careful consideration by this Department as we draft reauthorization legislation. A reauthorization bill will be submitted to the Congress for consideration this year.

Thank you for your continued support of the Comprehensive Child Development Program.

Sincerely,

Olivia A. Golden
Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

ES940125-9

Correspondence# 1253662
Department of Health and Human Services

January 13, 1994

Ms. Brenda Aldrich
Windham County Family Support Program
218 Canal Street
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

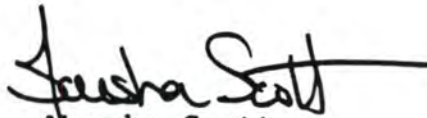
Dear Ms. Aldrich:

Thank you so much for your letter. President Clinton greatly appreciates the trust and confidence you have expressed in him by writing.

To ensure that your concerns are addressed, I am forwarding your letter to the Department of Health and Human Services for any appropriate action. Please bear in mind that it may take some time to look thoroughly into the concerns you have raised. Should you wish to contact them directly, you may write to: Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201.

Many thanks for your patience.

Sincerely,



Marsha Scott
Deputy Assistant to the President
Director of Correspondence and
Presidential Messages

940124051

1253662
Windham County
Family Support Program

October 13, 1993

President and Mrs. Bill Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20500

Dear President and Mrs. Clinton:

I hope this letter finds you both in good health, sir. I am writing to tell you about our five year, federally funded, comprehensive child development family support program here in Southern Vermont and it's positive results that we as members of the Parent Advisory Council for the group have seen since it's inception in 1989.

The Vermont Windham County Family Support Program, a Comprehensive Child Development Program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, is made up of the Parent Advisory Council that budgets and distributes monies from an annual budget that go into several supportive categories within the program. The Parent Advisory Council is to some extent, the governing body of the Program. We are made up of staff members, home visitors and parents within the program.

We are a comprehensive child development program which brings me to another facet of our program: Early Education Services. This part of the program enables parents to go to work knowing that their preschoolers are in capable hands and they are learning with other children. From my own experience, I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to grade school for our children. I am one of many in the program that believe that the values of a nation are the values of it's children.

In addition, we have men's and women's groups within the program run by staff members and parents, as well, that are designed to offer periodic relief from the pressures and stress that many folk in today's world otherwise might resort to things such as substance abuse or child neglect. These types of things are outdoor events for the whole family or parents' nights out for some bowling or a pool swim while the children are being taken care of by highly qualified personnel. We are also in tune with local rehabilitation facilities and feel compelled to offer outside referrals if any individual feels they need to pursue that avenue.

One of the many positive things that the program has done for many families, whether they are single mothers or mothers and fathers with children, is that they sit down with you in your own home in a very relaxed atmosphere and discuss realistic and attainable goals for you as a family or an individual and then they support you in reaching those goals. Personally, I never knew the self confidence I know now because of the program.

In closing, I would just say that refusal of reauthorization of this program would be a devastating loss to many people.

Respectfully yours,

Brenda Aldrich
Patsy Brooks
Michelle Burdzykewski
Kern Laflam
Brian T Davis
Richard Strange
Judy Strange

The Parent Advisory Council

218 Canal Street • Brattleboro • Vermont 05301 • (802) 254-3742 • FAX: (802) 254-3750

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
006a. letter	From: Olivia Golden [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (2 pages)	11/18/1994	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S
rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

NOV 18 1994

(b)(6)

[006a]

Dear Ms. (b)(6) :

I am responding to your letter to First Lady Hillary Clinton regarding your need for assistance in obtaining care for your son.

I was very touched by your own courage and determination. I know that it requires a special fortitude to meet the challenges of raising a disabled child on your own, working to support yourself and your son, and finding good quality care which meets your son's needs.

Four Federal programs provide child care assistance to low-income families. The AFDC/JOBS Child Care and Transitional Child Care (TCC) programs help families moving from welfare to work, while At-Risk Child Care (ARCC) and the Child Care and Development Block Grant enable low-income working families to remain self-sufficient.

For additional information on the availability of Federal funding for these programs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I suggest that you contact:

Ms. Katherine Holod, Director
Bureau of Child Day Care Services
Office of Children, Youth and Families
Department of Public Welfare
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105
(717) 787-8691

You did not mention your son's age. If he is three or four years of age, he may be eligible to participate in Head Start. Head Start is the nation's leading early childhood development program for low-income families and is recognized as a leader in integrating children with special needs into the regular program. At least 10 percent of children served by Head Start are children with disabilities. In addition, although Head Start does have income eligibility requirements, up to 10 percent of families in a program can have incomes above the guidelines. Thus some families whose children would particularly benefit from a Head Start experience are able to take advantage of this opportunity even if they are otherwise ineligible.

Page 2 - Ms.

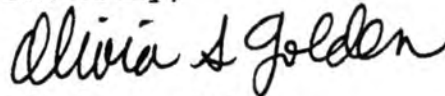
(b)(6)

The Head Start program nearest you appears to be located in Gettysburg. For more information, please contact the following agency:

A.C.C.E.S.S.
165 York Street
P.O. Box 3741
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325
(717) 337-1337

I hope this information will be helpful to you in obtaining care for your son.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olivia A. Golden".

Olivia A. Golden
Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
006b. letter	From: Alice J. Pushkar [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	10/20/1994	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S

rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES

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- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Correspondence# 1870579
Department of Health and Human Services

RECEIVED

94 OCT 24 AM 8:28

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
COMMUNICATIONS
CONTROL CENTER

October 20, 1994

(b)(6)

[0066]

Dear Ms.

(b)(6)

Thank you very much for your recent letter. Mrs. Clinton greatly appreciates your expression of trust and confidence in her.

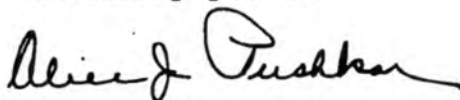
To ensure that your concerns are addressed, I have referred your letter to the following agency for any appropriate action:

Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

I have asked the agency for a prompt reply, but please bear in mind that it may take some time to look thoroughly into the concerns you raised. If you have any questions after reviewing the agency's response, you may write to the address listed above.

I appreciate your patience and hope that your situation is resolved satisfactorily.

Sincerely yours,



Alice J. Pushkar
Director of Correspondence
for the First Lady

9410240146

14950
LHaw
1870579
September 9, 1994
First Lady Mrs. Hilary Clinton
White House
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mrs. Clinton,

I am a resident of Adams County Pennsylvania. I am presently writing to you regarding a very important issue that is also very close to home for me.

I am a single mother of a special needs child. I am required to work full time in order to support my son and myself. But this presents a major problem. That being the available daycare services for special needs children is extremely limited in South Central Pennsylvania. At present my son has no physical disabilities but he is mentally retarded, has attention deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and has recently been diagnosed with Mucopolysaccharidosis. The Mucopolysaccharidosis is a deposit disorder syndrome and causes various degrees of regression with numerous further medical complications. This is a deteriorating condition and consequently will require additional care to take care of him as it progresses.

The past two years have been a nightmare for me to find childcare due to my son being a special needs child. The daycare provided hear those two words and suddenly have no available openings. I have talked to (MHMR) Mental Health Mental Retardation, United Cerebral Palsy, York Association for Retarded Citizens, PA Department of Welfare, and numerous other agencies only to find out there is no real care for these children. In fact, most parents end up staying home, collect welfare and supplemental Social Security Income.

I am a Registered Nurse and do not feel that I should be collecting welfare as long as I am physically able to work. I have taken a position as an Occupational Health Nurse with Utz Quality Foods in order to avoid swing shifts and night hours to help make child care easier. But this has led to no avail. Luckily, my employer has been very understanding and supportive but other employees have not and are not.

I am not the only one in this situation, there are numerous other families I have talked to that also suffer this dilemma.

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
006c. letter	re: personal story [Personally Identifiable Information] [partial] (1 page)	09/09/1994	b(6)

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Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Lissa Muscatine
OA/Box Number: 12076

FOLDER TITLE:

Children - Childcare

2017-1164-S
rc2869

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
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I am not looking for miracles but any assistance would be highly appreciated. I know the state provides assistance and child care programs for "normal" children. But what about these kids. They deserve a fair chance also.

Thankyou for listening and for any help you can provide.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

[006c]